



PHILOSOPHY
Higher

Valid from August 2010

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National Course Specification

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

CODE C268 12

COURSE STRUCTURE

This Course has four mandatory Units which are:

F8K4 12	Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)	0.5 credits (20 hours)
F8K5 12	Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)	0.5 credits (20 hours)
F8K7 12	Epistemology (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)
F8K6 12	Moral Philosophy (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)

All Courses include 40 hours over and above the 120 hours for the Units. This may be used for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning and preparation for external assessment.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

Administrative Information

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National Course Specification (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

PROGRESSION

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Further or Higher Education Courses which include the study of philosophy or require the ability to reason in a critical manner
- ◆ Employment

CREDIT VALUE

The Higher Course in Philosophy is allocated 24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6.

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

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Course gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill — None

Core Skills component — Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

National Course Specification: course details

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

RATIONALE

Scotland has long been recognised as providing educational opportunities to its citizens that encompass both breadth and depth. The need to educate the whole person, and not simply concentrate on immediately obvious practical skills, is also firmly embedded in all Scottish educational philosophy. As a result education focuses on the dual objectives of providing citizens with practical skills and knowledge related to employment, and broader intellectual and social skills which enable them to participate fully in society and lead rich, fulfilling lives. It is also recognised that these broader skills are increasingly important as societies become more complex and ideologically diverse. Scottish society today has been influenced by a wide variety of cultures and traditions, and it is therefore important that all its citizens are able to develop and express their own values and perspectives in a reasoned way. In addition, it is important that they are able to discuss and reflect upon perspectives and values which may be different from their own. This can only be accomplished through a process of reasoned debate and discussion which acknowledges shared human experiences and also the validity of alternative views. Developing a reasoned and structured approach to all forms of discourse will contribute to this process.

The opportunity for individuals to develop and discuss their own values and perspectives, and learn to appreciate alternative values and perspectives, is an important aspect of Scottish Primary and Secondary Education. For this reason the process of discussion, debate and reflection features in many areas of the curriculum from P1-S4. The Higher Philosophy Course provides the opportunity for candidates to continue to develop the concepts and skills needed for productive social discourse and offers certificated progression in S5 and S6. The Course is also suitable for delivery in Further Education colleges and is appropriate for adult students who have an interest in philosophical issues.

Candidates who gain a Course award will be in a good position to continue their studies of philosophical issues in Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Those who choose to progress to study alternative subjects will also benefit: developing critical thinking skills and the ability to reason effectively is an important part of the Higher Philosophy Course and these skills are of relevance in all subject areas. This will enable candidates to develop as members of society who can express their own opinions and values confidently but also appreciate the opinions and values of others.

The Course consists of four mandatory Units. The *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit helps candidates to develop an understanding of good and bad arguments and the skills necessary to reason in an effective manner. In the *Metaphysics* Unit candidates investigate a perennial philosophical debate and the different positions adopted in relation to that debate. The *Epistemology* Unit focuses on questions surrounding the nature, sources and possibilities of knowledge. *Moral Philosophy* involves the study of issues and positions concerning moral judgements and their nature.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

AIMS

The Course aims to allow candidates to:

- ◆ develop critical thinking skills which are of importance in all areas of human life and discourse
- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding of philosophical techniques, issues, positions and concepts which are relevant in many areas of human life and discourse
- ◆ develop analytical and evaluative skills which will allow them to examine the reasoning and assumptions on which the positions and theories they study are based
- ◆ present their own ideas and opinions in a reasoned and structured manner
- ◆ gain insight from the ideas and opinions of others which may conflict with their own
- ◆ engage personally with a range of important questions and issues in order to inform their own ideas and opinions in a way which contributes to personal and social development

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

COURSE CONTENT

The Course consists of four mandatory Units *Critical Thinking in Philosophy, Metaphysics, Epistemology* and *Moral Philosophy*. Although the content of each Unit does not presuppose knowledge acquired in the other Units, there are significant opportunities to integrate both knowledge and skills while studying the Course. Whenever an opportunity to integrate knowledge and skills across the Units arises, candidates should be made aware of this and be encouraged to maximise this potential. Detailed guidance on opportunities for integration and development can be found in the ‘Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course’ in the Course Specification.

A summary of the content of each Unit appears below:

1 Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

In this Unit candidates develop an understanding of the nature of arguments and some of the characteristics of effective and ineffective arguments. Candidates then use this understanding to critically analyse and evaluate previously unseen examples of ordinary language arguments.

Candidates must study **all** content. A brief summary of the content of the Unit appears below:

Candidates gain an understanding of the nature of arguments and of some of the terms and concepts needed to critically analyse and evaluate arguments in a philosophical manner. The content is studied under two headings which are:

- ◆ understanding the nature of arguments
- ◆ reliable and unreliable arguments

A detailed outline of all mandatory content can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of each Unit Specification.

2 Metaphysics (Higher)

In this Unit candidates study **one** metaphysical debate from a **choice of two**. The relevant metaphysical debates are:

- ◆ Debate 1: Is there a rational basis for belief in God?
- ◆ Debate 2: Do we have free will?

Candidates investigate specific positions which are adopted in relation to the chosen debate. They also study objections to these positions and replies to these objections.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

A detailed outline of the mandatory content for both debates can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of the Unit Specification. Candidates must study **all** content **in relation to their chosen debate**.

3 Epistemology (Higher)

In this Unit candidates study specific philosophical issues in the area of Epistemology. They also study the positions of either René Descartes or David Hume. The Unit is divided into two Sections and a brief overview of each Section appears below:

Section 1:

There is no choice of options in this Section of the Unit and candidates must study all mandatory content.

Candidates investigate three questions which are relevant in the area of epistemology. The three questions are:

- ◆ What is knowledge?
- ◆ How is knowledge acquired?
- ◆ Can knowledge claims be justified?

Section 2:

In this Section of the Unit there is a choice of option to be studied. Candidates investigate either a specific rationalist or a specific empiricist epistemological position. The options are:

- ◆ Option A — Descartes' Rationalism

OR

- ◆ Option B — Hume's Empiricism

Candidates must study all mandatory content in relation to their chosen option.

The positions adopted by each philosopher are based on reasoning and assumptions which can only properly be understood by examining the writings of the relevant philosopher. Candidates must therefore investigate the chosen position by studying key extracts from the writings of that philosopher. **The key extracts are prescribed.**

A detailed outline of all mandatory content for each Section, including the key extracts for each option in Section Two, can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of the Unit Specification.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

4 Moral Philosophy (Higher)

In this Unit candidates must study **all** mandatory content in relation to Moral Philosophy. A brief overview appears below:

In this Unit candidates investigate two specific normative moral theories which illustrate both a **consequentialist** and a **deontological** approach to moral judgements. The specific theories are:

- ◆ the consequentialist theory of Utilitarianism as illustrated by the ideas of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill
- ◆ the deontological theory of Immanuel Kant

Questions in Unit and Course assessment will sample across the mandatory content. It is therefore of vital importance that candidates are familiar with **all** content. A detailed outline of the mandatory content can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of the Unit Specification.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

ASSESSMENT

To achieve the Course award the candidate must pass all Unit assessments as well as the Course assessment. The candidate's grade is based on the Course assessment.

Assessment objectives

The aim of both Unit and Course assessment is to allow candidates to demonstrate competence in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding of:

- ◆ the nature of argument
- ◆ a metaphysical debate and positions adopted in relation to that debate
- ◆ philosophical issues and positions in the area of epistemology
- ◆ normative moral theories

The skills of Critical Analysis and Evaluation with reference to:

- ◆ ordinary language arguments
- ◆ positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate
- ◆ normative moral theories
- ◆ philosophical issues and positions in the area of epistemology
- ◆ prescribed extracts from the writings of either Descartes or Hume

Allocation of Marks:

A summary of the relative weighting of marks in Unit and Course assessment appears below:

Type of Assessment	Knowledge and Understanding	Analysis and Evaluation
Unit Assessment	50% of the marks available	50% of the marks available
Course Assessment	50% of the marks available	50% of the marks available

Unit assessment

Satisfactory evidence of the attainment of all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for each Unit is in the form of written and/or recorded oral responses to structured or extended response questions. To maintain reliability and credibility, assessment evidence is produced under supervision, ensuring that it is the candidate's own work. The evidence is produced in response to a closed-book test with a time limit of 30 minutes each for the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* and *Metaphysics* Units. The time limit for Unit assessment in the *Epistemology* and *Moral Philosophy* Units is one hour each.

Further details about Unit assessment for this Course can be found in the National Assessment Bank materials and in the Unit Specifications.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

Course assessment

Attainment in the Course is assessed through an individual candidate's performance in a final exam. The exam is in the form of a single Question Paper. The Question Paper contains questions in relation to all four Units in the Course and has a time allocation of **2 hours 40 minutes**. The number of marks available for the Question Paper is **120**.

Candidates are required to attempt both structured and extended response questions which sample across the Course content.

Further details of the Course assessment are given in the Course Assessment Specification and in the Specimen Question Paper.

Link between Unit and course assessment/added value

Individual Unit assessment instruments allow candidates to demonstrate a level of knowledge, understanding and skills which is appropriate for attaining a Unit award at Higher. They also allow candidates to demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate these concepts and issues in a reasoned and structured manner.

When completing the Course assessment candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate the greater attainment required for the Course award by:

- ◆ demonstrating the long-term retention of knowledge and skills
- ◆ demonstrating the ability to answer questions relating to all Units on a single occasion
- ◆ demonstrating the ability to integrate aspects of knowledge and skills across the component Units

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS AT A AND C

The candidate's grade will be based on the total score obtained from the Course assessment. The descriptions below indicate the nature of achievement required for an award at Grade C and A in the Course.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

Skills	Grade C	Grade A
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<p>Candidates have described some (but not all) of the features of argument and the philosophical issues, theories and positions in relation to each Unit.</p> <p>The descriptions are mainly clear and largely accurate.</p>	<p>Candidates have described the main features of arguments and the philosophical issues, theories and positions in relation to each Unit.</p> <p>The descriptions are clear, accurate and presented in a well-structured manner.</p> <p>The descriptions may provide evidence of the integration of knowledge and understanding across the Units of the Course.</p>
<i>Critical Analysis and Evaluation</i>	<p>Candidates have explained some (but not all) of the stages of reasoning and the assumptions on which ordinary language arguments and philosophical positions, theories and accounts of knowledge are based.</p> <p>Candidates have explained some (but not all) of the following: deductive and inductive reasoning; sound and cogent arguments; examples of fallacious reasoning (Critical Thinking Unit).</p> <p>Candidates have explained some (but not all) of the implications, strengths and weaknesses of positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate and normative moral theories, and an account of knowledge.</p> <p>Candidates have made attempts to assess, or reach conclusions on, the soundness of ordinary language arguments and the relative merits of normative moral theories, and an account of knowledge.</p>	<p>Candidates have explained the main stages of reasoning and the assumptions on which ordinary language arguments and philosophical positions, theories and accounts of knowledge are based.</p> <p>Candidates have explained the following: deductive and inductive reasoning; sound and cogent arguments; examples of fallacious reasoning (Critical Thinking Unit).</p> <p>Candidates have explained the main implications, strengths and weaknesses of positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate and normative moral theories, and an account of knowledge.</p> <p>Candidates have assessed or reached conclusions on the soundness of ordinary language arguments and the relative merits of normative moral theories, and an account of knowledge.</p>

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

Skills	Grade C	Grade A
	<p>Candidates have given at least one reason which supports the assessments or conclusions they have reached.</p> <p>The points made are mainly clear and largely accurate.</p> <p>The points made relate to the question asked.</p>	<p>Candidates have given two or more developed reasons – based on evidence, aspects and/or sources previously discussed – which support the assessments or conclusions reached.</p> <p>The points made are clear and accurate.</p> <p>The points made are presented in a well-structured manner and are used to support a conclusion that answers the question asked.</p> <p>There may be evidence that the candidate is aware of the wider implications and/or relevance of the skills, theories, positions and issues they have studied.</p> <p>There may be evidence of the integration of knowledge and skills across the Units of the Course.</p>

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

ESTIMATES AND APPEALS

Estimates

In preparing estimates, evidence of performance should be considered from across the breadth of coverage of content of the Course and must take account of performance in all Units. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

Appeals

Evidence for the *Question Paper* is mandatory; it must show the same breadth of coverage of Course content as SQA's Question Paper and relate to the Course Grade Descriptions. While a prelim paper is not mandatory; it is an indicator of likely candidate performance in the external examination when pressure of time and retention of learning are significant factors. Evidence for the *Question Paper* should replicate as far as possible the standard, format, duration and security of SQA's Question Paper.

The evidence for the *Question Paper* could include:

- ◆ A prelim which covers all Units and replicates the standard, format, duration and security of SQA's Question Paper. This could support an Appeal for Grades A, B and C and would be the most convincing evidence for an Appeal for grade A.
- ◆ A prelim which covers all Units and is split into parts and the two parts have been separated by a period of time rather than being taken on one occasion. Centres should be aware that the level of demand is less than the Course assessment. The level of demand can be increased in a number of ways such as raising the cut-off scores or by increasing the level of challenge of the prelim. This could support an Appeal for Grades A, B and C.
- ◆ A prelim which covers a minimum of two Units of the Course and a NAB for the third Unit. This could support an Appeal for a grade C (possibly grade B), but not an Appeal for a grade A.

Where evidence used for estimates covers only part of the Course and additional evidence is required for Appeals for the remaining Unit or section of the Course, this must be in the same format as the Course assessment and completed under examination conditions.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

All National Courses are subject to external marking and/or verification. External markers, visiting examiners and external verifiers are trained by SQA to apply national standards.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

The Units of all Courses are subject to internal moderation and may also be chosen for external verification. This is to ensure that national standards are being applied across all subjects.

Courses may be assessed by a variety of methods. Where marking is undertaken by a trained marker in their own time, markers' meetings are held to ensure that a consistent standard is applied. The work of all markers is subject to scrutiny by the Principal Assessor.

To assist centres, External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports are published on SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS COURSE

Induction to the Course

The most important starting point for the Course will be to establish appropriate expectations and attitudes among the candidates. This will involve making it clear that the Course does not simply involve learning facts about philosophical issues, theories and positions. Philosophy, by its very nature is an interactive activity since it involves assessing the relative merits of competing claims. It cannot simply be learned by reading books and writing essays; candidates must be given frequent opportunities to engage in debate and other interactive activities. Candidates therefore need to develop an enquiring attitude which allows them to think critically about the issues, theories and positions they study. They must also learn to listen to, and reflect upon, the reasoning and opinions expressed by their teacher or lecturer and fellow students. This will encourage candidates to express their own opinions with confidence and create a climate in which reasoned, productive philosophical debate can take place.

Candidates should be made aware of the attitudes and skills which will be expected from them before teaching of the Course begins. They should understand that they will need to:

- ◆ respect the right of others to express values and positions which may conflict with their own
- ◆ develop the confidence to share their values and positions with others who may not agree with them
- ◆ identify and investigate the stages of reasoning and the important assumptions which underpin the theories and positions they study
- ◆ critically analyse their own values and positions, as well as those of others, in a reasoned and structured manner
- ◆ review and critically evaluate philosophical issues, theories and positions
- ◆ reach clear conclusions about philosophical issues, theories and positions based on the information and evidence they have studied
- ◆ be prepared to explain the reasoning they have used in order to reach these conclusions

This can be done in many ways in light of the prior experience of candidates, the range of candidates studying the Course and available resources. Teachers and lecturers will need to use their professional judgement. Attitudes cannot be assessed or instilled but can only be encouraged. However, candidates should have a clear idea of the skills and attitudes they will need to develop and demonstrate during their study of the Higher Philosophy Course.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

The Order of Delivery of Component Units: maximising opportunities for the integration and development of knowledge and skills

The preferred order for the delivery of component Units is a matter which each centre must decide for itself. This will depend upon the number of staff members who are delivering the Course and the organisation of individual timetables.

Developing Knowledge and Understanding and the skills of Critical Analysis and Evaluation

There are many ways to promote knowledge and understanding, and critical analysis and evaluation skills. Appropriate methods will, as mentioned above, depend on the prior experience of candidates, the range of candidates studying the Course and the resources available. A menu of possible activities appears below. This menu is not exhaustive, but reflects a variety of learning and teaching approaches:

- ◆ teachers' presentations of information
- ◆ teacher-led question and answer sessions
- ◆ individual study which is reinforced by structured questions
- ◆ individual/group/paired work which is focused on the retrieval of information
- ◆ feedback sessions from individual/group/paired work which involves recording information, stages of reasoning and conclusions
- ◆ multiple choice questions — these may be attempted individually, in pairs or in groups - they could be approached in the manner of a formative assessment, quiz, match-up or arranging-under-correct-headings exercises
- ◆ true-or-false activities which require the individual/group/pair to give reasons for the choice of answer
- ◆ visits by external speakers which involve both presentation and feedback
- ◆ structured debates where candidates are required to propose or oppose a motion which may not be in agreement with their personal views
- ◆ homework exercises which are designed to reinforce or extend activities in the classroom or lecture theatre
- ◆ structured individual/group/paired study of sources which relate to the issues, theories arguments and positions being investigated
- ◆ attempting past paper questions individually or in groups/pairs
- ◆ feedback from Unit assessments which highlights the achievements and next steps for candidates

Assessment as a Learning and Teaching Opportunity

Unit assessment provides a clear indication of whether or not candidates have achieved the minimum standards required to pass an individual Unit. As such, Unit assessment is summative. However, for candidates who require reassessment and/or intend to attempt the Course assessment, all assessment has a formative value.

In order to make maximum use of assessment, teachers and lecturers need to provide meaningful feedback on all items of formative and summative assessment. This feedback should highlight areas where candidates have performed well. It should also highlight areas where candidates need additional development. The nature of such feedback will depend on the prior experience of candidates, the range of candidates and the resources available.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

The Use of the Additional 40 Hours

A summary of the use of the additional 40 hours would comprise:

- ◆ an initial orientation programme outlining the content of the Course and the skills to be developed
- ◆ the provision of additional support and follow-up assessment in order to ensure all Outcomes of component Units have been achieved
- ◆ engaging in discussion and practice to extend the use of analytical and evaluative skills in a variety of contexts
- ◆ the use of oral or written extended responses — this will help to integrate and extend skills and provide estimated grades

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



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

CODE F8K4 12

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Higher Philosophy Course, but it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit offers progression for candidates who have studied the Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Units. It is also suitable as a higher level introduction for those who have no background in the subject. In this Unit, candidates develop the skills necessary to examine arguments and recognise the characteristics of effective and ineffective arguments. The understanding and skills developed in this Unit are relevant in all areas of human life. The ability to argue clearly and to recognise strong and weak reasoning in the arguments of others is a powerful tool in all personal and social contexts.

Specific features of both effective and ineffective arguments are studied in this Unit but the understanding and critical thinking skills developed are relevant in a wide variety of contexts. These skills prepare candidates for the study of Philosophy at Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Candidates will also be prepared for the study of any other subject which requires the ability to understand and analyse arguments. In addition, candidates will have demonstrated the skills necessary for entry into any field of employment where the ability to reason constructively is required.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of arguments
- 2 Critically analyse ordinary language arguments
- 3 Critically evaluate ordinary language arguments

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

0.5 credits at Higher (3 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill — None

Core Skills component — Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of arguments.

Performance Criteria

- (a) describe the difference between statements and arguments
- (b) describe the difference between deductive and inductive reasoning
- (c) use ordinary language examples to support these descriptions

OUTCOME 2

Critically analyse ordinary language arguments.

Performance Criteria

- (a) identify the premises and conclusions of ordinary language arguments
- (b) present these arguments in a way which demonstrates the stages of reasoning involved
- (c) explain whether these arguments employ deductive or inductive reasoning

OUTCOME 3

Critically evaluate ordinary language arguments.

Performance Criteria

- (a) explain specific examples of fallacious reasoning in ordinary language arguments
- (b) explain whether or not the conclusions of these arguments follow from the premises
- (c) explain whether these arguments are sound or unsound
- (d) state reasons which support the explanations given

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence which samples across the mandatory content. The evidence should be produced in response to a closed-book, supervised test with a time limit of 30 minutes. It should be gathered on a single occasion.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by short answer, restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content and should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Approximately fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for demonstrating knowledge and understanding in line with Outcome 1. The remaining fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation in line with Outcomes 2 and 3.

Candidates will be expected to critically analyse and evaluate previously unseen examples of ordinary language arguments in both Unit and Course assessment. The use of a cut-off score is appropriate for this assessment.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. When reassessment is required individual candidates should therefore attempt a new assessment in its entirety to ensure that a different range of mandatory content is sampled.

The standard to be applied, cut-off score and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

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 20 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

In this Unit candidates develop an understanding of the nature of arguments and some of the characteristics of effective and ineffective arguments. Candidates then use this understanding to critically analyse and evaluate previously unseen examples taken from everyday life.

Candidates must study **all** content. A brief summary of the content of the Unit appears below:

Candidates gain an understanding of the nature of arguments and of some of the terms and concepts needed to critically analyse and evaluate arguments in a philosophical manner. The content is studied under two headings which are:

- ◆ Understanding the nature of arguments
- ◆ Reliable and unreliable arguments

A detailed outline of all mandatory content can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of these Support Notes.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Throughout their study of this Unit, candidates will develop knowledge and skills which can be used to analyse arguments wherever they appear, be it in the spoken or written word. However, critical thinking can be a very abstract discipline for many candidates and teachers and lecturers should make every effort to draw relevant examples from everyday life to make the key concepts and teaching points as easy to grasp as possible. This might be achieved by:

- ◆ asking candidates to comment on real-life examples drawn from television programmes, newspaper articles or radio debates.
- ◆ encouraging candidates to find or create their own examples of arguments and fallacies.

This analysis of everyday examples in critical thinking will bring candidates into contact with the complexity of ordinary language in the written and spoken word. Candidates will be required to tease out arguments as presented by others and to this end must be familiar with some common principles of ordinary language analysis which need to be observed before the argument can be evaluated. The first of these is that many everyday examples make use of hidden or assumed premises which may need to be made explicit. The second is that people may make use of rhetorical questions in order to convey information that would otherwise be communicated in a statement. The third is that, when in doubt as to the intention of a statement or argument, one should always adopt a ‘principle of charity’ to present the argument as favourably or as charitably as one can.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

Candidates will be expected to critically analyse and evaluate previously unseen examples of arguments in both Unit and Course assessment. This ability can be developed only if candidates are continually given practice in applying the relevant concepts and skills in new and varied contexts. A wealth of materials exist to aid this task in the form of support materials, books and websites.

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates develop techniques to help them analyse and evaluate previously unseen arguments in a reasoned and structured manner. One possible approach to developing such techniques appears below:

- ◆ What is the conclusion of the argument?
- ◆ What are the stated premises of the argument?
- ◆ Does the argument use any rhetorical questions which might function as premises?
- ◆ Does the argument trade on any hidden premises?
- ◆ If so, what might these hidden premises be?
- ◆ Is the conclusion supported by independent premises or by premises working in conjunction with one another?
- ◆ Does the argument contain any intermediate conclusions?
- ◆ Are the premises true, false or debatable in any way?
- ◆ Is the argument an example of deductive or inductive reasoning?
- ◆ If the argument is deductive, is the argument valid or sound?
- ◆ If the argument is inductive, is the argument strong or cogent?
- ◆ Does the argument commit any of the fallacies I have studied?

Some of the content of this Unit can also be studied in the Intermediate 2 *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit. If a centre makes the judgment that the Intermediate 2 Unit would be more appropriate for a particular candidate, the candidate can be assessed at that level without difficulty. However, it should be noted that there are differences in the skills assessed at that level. If candidates have already studied the Intermediate 2 *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have already acquired.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

Guidance on induction and a variety of classroom activities can be found in the ‘Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course’ in the Course Details.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are outlined in the Evidence Requirements for the Unit in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of the mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an end of Unit test.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by short answer, restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding and the remaining fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation.

Appropriate instruments of assessment, marking schemes and cut-off scores are contained in the National Assessment Bank items for this Unit.

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

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the Statement of Standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

There are no options in this Unit: Candidates must study all content.

In this Unit candidates must develop an understanding of the nature of arguments and some of the characteristics of effective and ineffective arguments. Candidates must then use this understanding to discuss novel examples taken from everyday life.

The specific content to be studied is detailed below:

1 Understanding the nature of arguments

Features of statements:	Distinguished from questions, commands and exclamations Can be true or false Can only assert or deny a claim
Features of arguments:	Composed of statements Cannot be true or false Can prove or refute a claim
Argument structure:	Premises and Conclusions Hidden premises Rhetorical questions Intermediate conclusions Standard form
Distinction between deductive and inductive arguments:	Deductive Arguments – Can be Valid and Sound Attempts to draw certain conclusions from premises
Inductive Arguments –	Can be Strong and Cogent Attempts to draw probable conclusions from premises

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the Statement of Standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

2 Unreliable arguments

Features of unreliable arguments: Invalid and/or Unsound (Deductive arguments)
Weak and/or Not Cogent (Inductive arguments)

Types of Fallacious reasoning

Formal Fallacies

Denying the antecedent
Affirming the consequent

Informal fallacies

post hoc ergo propter hoc (After this therefore because of this)
false dilemma
argument from ignorance
attacking the person
illegitimate appeals to authority
slippery slope

Glossary

It is accepted that different critical thinking and logic textbooks may use different terminology from one another or use the same terminology in different contexts. Therefore, for the purposes of clarity and consistency, the following definitions are those which will be used in SQA documents, Unit and Course assessments and associated marking schemes:

Affirming the consequent: this fallacy is committed when an argument has the following structure. If ‘P then Q, Q, therefore P’ eg, ‘If you are Spanish then you are an EU citizen. You are an EU citizen, so you must be Spanish’.

Argument from ignorance: this fallacy is committed if it is argued that since p has not been proved true, it must be false (or that since p has not been proved false, it must be true)

Argument: a collection of statements (the premises) put forward to support a central claim (the conclusion).

Attacking the person: this fallacy is committed if it is argued that p is false on the ground that it is advanced by a particular person, for example because that person stands to gain from our acceptance of it as true or because that person’s behaviour is not consistent with the truth of p .

Cogency: a strong inductive argument which also has true premises is said to be cogent. False premises or premises which can provide only weak evidence for the conclusion make the argument either not cogent or less cogent.

Deductive argument: an argument which attempts to prove certain conclusions based on what is contained in the premises alone. Eg “All cats have tails. Felix is a cat, therefore Felix has a tail.

Denying the antecedent: this fallacy is committed when an argument has the following structure ‘If P then Q, Not P, therefore Q’ eg If you are Spanish then you are an EU citizen. You are not Spanish, so you can’t be an EU citizen”.

False dilemma: this fallacy is committed if, in the course of an argument, it is presumed without argument that p and q are the only two possibilities, when in fact there are other possibilities.

Formal Fallacy: a common error in reasoning that is fallacious by virtue of having an invalid structure or form.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

Hidden Premise: a statement which is not explicitly stated in an argument but on which the argument may rest for its strength or validity eg the argument ‘All dogs are carnivores so Fido is a carnivore’ rests on the hidden premise that ‘Fido is a dog’ to make it formally valid.

Illegitimate appeals to authority: this fallacy is committed if a conclusion *c* is inferred from the fact that some person or group asserts *c*, without justifying the right of that person or group to be regarded as authoritative in this matter.

Inductive argument: an argument based on experiential premises where the conclusion goes beyond what is said in the premises. The conclusions of an inductive argument are usually said to be probable rather than certain. Eg, ‘Every cat I have seen has a tail. Felix is a cat therefore, Felix has a tail’.

Informal Fallacy: an argument which may be formally valid yet is fallacious because it has false premises or ambiguous terminology or grammar.

Post hoc ergo propter hoc: this fallacy is committed if it is assumed, in the course of an argument, that because *x* and *y* occur one after the other that the one causes the other.

Rhetorical Question: a question that is asked in order to state a point or for dramatic effect rather than to elicit an answer. Rhetorical questions can therefore sometimes be interpreted as statements. Eg the question ‘Who knows?’ might be interpreted as being equivalent to the statement ‘Nobody knows’.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

Slippery slope: an informal fallacy which claims that one thing will inevitably lead later to another, usually worse, state of affairs, without further argument.

Soundness: a deductive argument which has true premises and is valid is said to be sound. An unsound argument is therefore one which has either a false premise or is invalid or both.

Standard form: a consistent way of organizing and presenting arguments which involves identifying the premises and conclusions; converting any rhetorical questions; making explicit hidden premises; identifying intermediate conclusions and listing them in a logical sequence (eg premise, premise, conclusion)

Statement: a sentence capable of being true or false (eg ‘the sky is blue’). Statements are also known as propositions.

Strong/Weak: an inductive argument which provides a lot of evidence for the conclusion is said to be strong while one which provides a small amount is said to be weak. The terms strong and weak are necessarily relative. Eg, ‘I have seen a hundred cats with tails therefore all cats have tails’ is a weaker argument than ‘I have seen a thousand cats with tails, therefore all cats have tails’

Validity: a valid argument is one which would guarantee a true conclusion if the premises were true. An invalid argument does not guarantee a true conclusion when the premises are true.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

CODE F8K5 12

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Higher Philosophy Course, but it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit offers progression for candidates who have studied the Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Units. It is also suitable as a higher level introduction for those who have no background in the subject. The debates and positions studied in this Unit are relevant to many questions of ultimate human significance, for example: Is human life simply an accident of nature? Is there some ultimate meaning and purpose to be found in the universe? Do I have control over my actions? Are my actions simply a product of my genes and environment?

Candidates develop an understanding of a specific metaphysical debate and positions adopted in relation to that debate. They study **either** the debate concerning the existence of God **or** the free will/determinism debate. Candidates then critically analyse and evaluate the specific positions which are relevant to the chosen debate.

A specific metaphysical debate and positions are studied in this Unit but the understanding and critical thinking skills developed are relevant in a wide variety of contexts. The skills and content prepare candidates for the study of Philosophy in Courses at Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Candidates will also be prepared for the study of any other subject which requires the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate complex problems or positions. In addition, candidates will have demonstrated the skills necessary for entry into any field of employment where abstract reasoning is required.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Critically analyse a metaphysical debate.
- 2 Critically evaluate positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate.

Administrative Information

Superclass: DE

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

0.5 credits at Higher (3 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill — None

Core Skills component — Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT **Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)**

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Critically analyse a metaphysical debate.

Performance Criteria

- (a) describe why a specific metaphysical debate arises
- (b) describe specific positions which are adopted in relation to this debate
- (c) explain the reasoning and assumptions on which these positions are based

OUTCOME 2

Critically evaluate positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate.

Performance Criteria

- (a) explain the strengths and weaknesses of specific positions in relation to a specific metaphysical debate
- (b) present a conclusion on the relative merits of these positions
- (c) state reasons, based on aspects already discussed, in support of this conclusion

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence which samples across the mandatory content of the Unit. The evidence should be produced in response to a closed-book, supervised test with a time limit of 30 minutes. It should be gathered on a single occasion.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Approximately fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding and the remaining fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation. The use of a cut-off score is appropriate for this assessment.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. When reassessment is required individual candidates should therefore attempt a new assessment in its entirety to ensure that a different range of mandatory content is sampled.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

The standard to be applied, cut-off score and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

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 20 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates study **one** metaphysical debate from a **choice of two**. The relevant metaphysical debates are:

- ◆ Debate 1: Is there a rational basis for belief in God?
- ◆ Debate 2: Do we have free will?

Candidates investigate specific positions which are adopted in relation to the chosen debate. They also study objections to these positions and replies to these objections.

A detailed outline of the mandatory content for both debates can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of these Support Notes. Candidates must study **ALL** content **in relation to their chosen debate**.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Throughout their study of this Unit, candidates will encounter philosophical terms which are relevant to the study of their chosen debate. Candidates should be encouraged to become familiar with and use relevant philosophical terms appropriately when discussing the issues involved and completing written tasks. A glossary containing relevant terminology can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of this Unit Specification.

Candidates gain an understanding of specific positions which are adopted in relation to a particular metaphysical debate. The positions are prescribed. Care must be taken to ensure that candidates do not simply learn to describe these positions but also learn to critically analyse and evaluate them in a meaningful way. **For this reason it is essential that candidates are taught how to recognise and explain the reasoning and assumptions on which each position is based. It is also essential that candidates study objections to these positions and appropriate replies.** This will allow candidates to appreciate fully the nature of philosophical debate and enhance their skills of critical analysis and evaluation.

Specific objections to each position, and replies to these objections, are not prescribed. These are a matter for the professional judgement of teachers and lecturers in light of the resources available and their knowledge of the prior experience of candidates. However, care must be taken to avoid distorting candidates' understanding of these perennial philosophical debates by selecting obscure or trivial objections while ignoring those which are more common or substantial.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

Some of the content of this Unit can also be studied in the Intermediate 2 *Metaphysics* Unit. If a centre makes the judgement that the Intermediate 2 Unit would be more appropriate for a particular candidate, the candidate can be assessed at that level without difficulty. However, it should be noted that there are differences in the skills assessed at that level. If candidates have already studied the Intermediate 2 *Metaphysics* Unit there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have already acquired.

For candidates who study this Unit as part of the Higher Course, there are significant opportunities to integrate knowledge and/or skills across the Course. The skills of critical analysis and evaluation are relevant to all Units in the Course. Candidates will have many opportunities to adapt and refine these skills when using them in a variety of contexts.

Guidance on induction and a variety of classroom activities can be found in the ‘Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course’ in the Course Details.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are outlined in the ‘Evidence Requirements for the Unit’ in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of all mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an end-of-Unit test.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Approximately fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding and the remaining fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation.

Appropriate instruments of assessment, marking schemes and cut-off scores are contained in the National Assessment Bank items for this Unit.

DISABLED CANDIDATES AND/OR THOSE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

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www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

SOURCES

The following sources and arguments outlines are provided to exemplify the philosophical positions and arguments that candidates are required to study.

The Cosmological Argument, Extract One

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* First Part; Question 2

<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1002.htm> (Retrieved 15th Nov. 2009)

The second way is from the nature of the efficient cause. In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or only one. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.

The Cosmological Argument, Extract Two

Leibniz, from *The Monadology*

<http://spot.colorado.edu/~heathwoo/Phil100/leibniz.html> (Retrieved 15th Nov. 2009)

There is an infinity of figures...of minute inclinations....Now, all of this detail implies previous or more particular contingents, each of which again stands in need of similar analysis to be accounted for, so that nothing is gained by such analysis. The sufficient or ultimate reason must therefore exist outside the succession of series of contingent particulars, infinite though this series be. Consequently, the ultimate reason of all things must subsist in a necessary substance, in which all particular changes may exist only virtually as in its source: this substance is what we call God.

The Cosmological Argument, Extract Three

Reichenbach, Bruce, "Cosmological Argument", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/cosmological-argument> (Retrieved 15th Nov. 2009)

The Kalam Cosmological Argument

- 1 Everything that begins to exist has a cause of its existence.
- 2 The universe began to exist.
- 3 Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.
- 4 Since no scientific explanation (in terms of physical laws) can provide a causal account of the origin of the universe, the cause must be personal (explanation is given in terms of a personal agent)

...

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

In defence of premise 2, William L Craig develops both a priori and a posteriori arguments to defend the second premise. His primary a priori argument is:

- 5 An actual infinite cannot exist.
- 6 A beginningless temporal series of events is an actual infinite.
- 7 Therefore, a beginningless temporal series of events cannot exist.

The Teleological Argument, Extract One

William Paley, from *Natural Theology*

<http://home.att.net/~p.caimi/paley.html> (Retrieved 15th Nov. 2009)

IN crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there, I might possibly answer, that ... it had lain there forever ... but suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place, I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given, that, for any thing I knew, the watch might have always been there. Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? For this reason, that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are ... put together for a purpose. ... we think that the watch must have had a maker: that there must have existed, at some time, and at some place or other, an artificer or artificers who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer; who comprehended its construction, and designed its use. For every indication of contrivance, every manifestation of design, which existed in the watch, there exists in the works of Nature... there is precisely the same proof that the eye was [Created] for vision ...

The Teleological Argument, Extract Two

Ratzsch, Del, "Teleological Arguments for God's Existence", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.),

<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/teleological-arguments> (Retrieved 15th Nov. 2009)

Cosmic Fine-Tuning

It was recognized centuries back that conditions necessary for the flourishing of life were fairly tightly constrained (making the move to design in natural conditions and laws inherently attractive), but not until quite recent times has it been revealed through science itself just how wildly tight the constraints actually are, and just how many separate things have to converge, each within a miniscule value interval. For instance, here are two examples taken from Robin Collins:

- 1 If the initial explosion of the big bang had differed in strength by as little as one part in 1060, the universe would have either quickly collapsed back on itself, or expanded too rapidly for stars to form. In either case, life would be impossible. (As John Jefferson Davis points out, an accuracy of one part in 1060 can be compared to firing a bullet at a one-inch target on the other side of the observable universe, twenty billion light years away, and hitting the target.)
...
- 3 Calculations by Brandon Carter show that if gravity had been stronger or weaker by one part in 1040, then life-sustaining stars like the sun could not exist. This would most likely make life impossible. (Collins 1999, 49.)[28]

In light of these and other examples, Collins remarks that 'Almost everything about the basic structure of the universe ... is balanced on a razor's edge for life to occur.' (Collins 1999, 48).

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

The Teleological Argument, Extract Three

http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/theodore_drange/tuning.html (Retrieved 15th Nov. 2009)

One of the argument's 'print' advocates is George Schlesinger, who says the following:

In the last few decades a tantalizingly great number of exceedingly rare coincidences, vital for the existence of a minimally stable universe and without which no form of life could exist anywhere, have been discovered.... [G]iven any one of infinitely many universes, some conjunction or other of physical magnitudes will have to obtain. However, the prevailing conjunction is not merely one of indefinitely many; it is also an instance of a virtually infinitesimally rare kind of universe: the kind capable of sustaining life. The hypothesis that it was produced by a Being interested in sentient organic systems adequately explains this otherwise inexplicably astonishing fact. [NEW PERSPECTIVES ON OLD-TIME RELIGION, Oxford U.P., 1988, pp. 130,133]

A more precise formulation of the argument is the following, with premises indicated by "P" and conclusions indicated by 'C':

- (P1) The combination of physical constants that we observe in our universe is the only one capable of sustaining life as we know it.
- (P2) Other combinations of physical constants are conceivable.
- (C3) Therefore, some explanation is needed why our actual combination of physical constants exists rather than a different one.
- (P4) The very best explanation of the given fact is that our universe, with the particular combination of physical constants that it has, was created out of nothing by a single being who is omnipotent, omniscient, all-loving, eternal, and interested in sentient organic systems, and that he 'fine-tuned' those constants in a way which would lead to the evolution of such systems.
- (P5) But such a being as described in (P4) is what people mean by 'God.'
- (C6) Hence [from (P4) & (P5)], there is good evidence that God exists.

The Ontological Argument, Extract One

St. Anselm, *Proslogium*

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/o/ont-arg.htm> (Retrieved 15th Nov. 2009)

[Even a] fool, when he hears of ... a being than which nothing greater can be conceived ... understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his understanding.... And assuredly that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For suppose it exists in the understanding alone: then it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater.... Therefore, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists in the understanding alone, the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible. Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality.

The argument in this difficult passage can accurately be summarized in standard form:

- 1 It is a conceptual truth (or, so to speak, true by definition) that God is a being than which none greater can be imagined (that is, the greatest possible being that can be imagined).

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

- 2 God exists as an idea in the mind.
- 3 A being that exists as an idea in the mind and in reality is, other things being equal, greater than a being that exists only as an idea in the mind.
- 4 Thus, if God exists only as an idea in the mind, then we can imagine something that is greater than God (that is, a greatest possible being that does exist).
- 5 But we cannot imagine something that is greater than God (for it is a contradiction to suppose that we can imagine a being greater than the greatest possible being that can be imagined.)
- 6 Therefore, God exists.

Hard Determinism, Extract One

Pierre-Simon-Laplace, *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*

translated from the 6th French edition by Frederick Wilson Truscott and

Frederick Lincoln Emory, Dover Publications (New York, 1951) pp.4

We may regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its past and the cause of its future. An intellect which at a certain moment would know all forces that set nature in motion, and all positions of all items of which nature is composed, if this intellect were also vast enough to submit these data to analysis, it would embrace in a single formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the tiniest atom; for such an intellect nothing would be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes.

Hard Determinism, Extract Two

Paul-Henri Thiry (Baron) d'Holbach

Quoted in *An introduction to philosophical analysis* By John Hospers (Routledge 1997) p.165

Man's life is a line that nature commands him to describe upon the surface of the earth, without his ever being able to swerve from it, even for an instant. He is born without his own consent; his organization does in nowise depend upon himself; his ideas come to him involuntarily; his habits are in the power of those who cause him to contract them; he is unceasingly modified by causes, whether visible or concealed, over which he has no control, which necessarily regulate his mode of existence, give the hue to his way of thinking, and determine his manner of acting. He is good or bad, happy or miserable, wise or foolish, reasonable or irrational, without his will being for any thing in these various states. Nevertheless, in despite of the shackles by which he is bound, it is pretended he is a free agent, or that independent of the causes by which he is moved, he determines his own will, and regulates his own condition.

Libertarianism, Extract One

Roderick Chisholm, from *Human Freedom and the Self*

Reprinted in *Free Will*, ed Robert Kane, pub. Blackwell Publishers, 2002

The nature of what is intended by the expression 'immanent causation' may be illustrated by this sentence from Aristotle's *Physics*. 'Thus a staff moves a stone, and is moved by a hand, which is moved by a man' (Book VII, Chap. 5, 256a, 6-8). If a man was responsible, then we have in this illustration a number of instances of causation — most of them transeunt but at least one of them immanent. What the staff did to the stone was an instance of transeunt causation, and thus we may describe it as a relation between events: 'the motion of the staff caused the motion of the stone.' And similarly for what the hand did to the staff: 'the motion of the hand caused the motion of the staff.' And, as we know from physiology, there are still other events which caused the motion of the hand. Hence we need not introduce the agent at this particular point, as Aristotle does — we need not, though we may.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

We may say that the hand was moved by the man, but we may also say that the motion of the hand was caused by the motion of certain muscles; and we may say that the motion of the muscles was caused by certain events that took place within the brain. But some event, and presumably one of those that took place within the brain, was caused by the agent and not by any other events... If we are responsible, and if what I have been trying to say is true, then we have a prerogative which some would attribute only to God: each of us, when we act, is a prime mover unmoved. In doing what we do, we cause certain events to happen, and nothing — or no one — causes us to cause those events to happen.

Libertarianism, Extract Two

Thomas Reid, Letter to James Gregory

O'Connor, Timothy, "Free Will", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/freewill/>

I grant, then, that an effect uncaused is a contradiction, and that an event uncaused is an absurdity. The question that remains is whether a volition, undetermined by motives, is an event uncaused. This I deny. The cause of the volition is the man that willed it.

Libertarianism, Extract Three

Thomas Reid, from

***An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*
*Chapter 6, Of Seeing. Section XX: Of Perception in General***

(Note this extract is taken from a section on perception and is not specifically to do with freedom. However, it does give a clear statement about first principles.)

All reasoning is from principles. The first principles of mathematical reasoning are mathematical axioms and definitions, and the first principles of all our reasoning about existing things are our perceptions. The first principles of every kind of reasoning are given us by nature, and have as much authority as does the faculty of reason - which is also a gift of nature. The conclusions of reason are all built on first principles, and can't have any foundation but that. So it is quite proper that such principles refused to be tried by reason, and laugh at the artillery of the logician when it is aimed at them.

Libertarianism, Extract Four

Thomas Reid, from

***Essays on the Intellectual Powers, Chapter 2: Principles that I take for Granted*
In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com**

Just as there are words common to philosophers and to the vulgar, which don't need to be explained, so also there are principles common to both, which don't need to be proved and cannot be directly proved.

Someone who applies himself to any branch of science must have reached an age at which he is intellectually mature, so he must have used his reason and his other mental powers in various ways. He must have formed various opinions and principles by which he conducts himself in the affairs of life. Some of those principles are common to all men, being evident in themselves and so necessary in the conduct of life that a man can't live and act according to the rules of common prudence without them.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

Everyone who has ordinary intelligence accepts such principles, and regards anyone who denies or questions them as either mad or lacking in common sense. Suppose someone didn't believe his own eyes and put no trust in his senses, would anyone think it worthwhile to reason gravely with him, trying by argument to convince him of his error? Surely no wise man would. For men can't reason together unless they agree on first principles: it is impossible to reason with someone who has no principles in common with you.

So there are common principles, which are the basis of all reasoning and of all science. They seldom admit of direct proof, and they don't need it. Men don't need to be taught these common principles, because they're things that all normally intelligent men know - or at least readily agree to as soon as they are proposed and understood.

Compatibilism, Extract One

Thomas Hobbes, from *Leviathan*, chapter XXI

In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com

'The equivalent terms LIBERTY and FREEDOM, properly understood, signify the absence of opposition, that is, absence of external impediments to motion. These terms may be applied to unthinking and inanimate creatures just as much as to thinking ones. For when something — anything — is tied down or hemmed in so that it can move only within a certain space, this space being determined by the opposition of some external body, we say it doesn't have 'liberty' to go further. So when any living creature is imprisoned or restrained by walls or chains, or when water that would otherwise spread itself into a larger space is held back by banks or containers, we are accustomed to say that it is 'not at liberty' to move in the way that it would without those external impediments. But when the impediment to motion lies in the constitution of the thing itself — as when a stone lies still, or a man is held to his bed by sickness — what we say it lacks is not the 'liberty' to move but rather the 'power' to move.

And according to this proper and generally accepted meaning of the word 'free', a FREEMAN is someone who is not hindered from doing anything he wants to do that he has the strength and wit for. But when the words 'free' and 'liberty' are applied to anything other than bodies they are misused; for if something is not the sort of thing that can move, it is not the sort of thing that can be impeded. I shall give four examples of such misuses.

- a) When it is said that 'the path is free', liberty is attributed not to the path but to those who walk along it.
- b) When we say 'the gift is free', we don't mean to attribute liberty to the gift; we are attributing it to the giver, who was not bound by any law or covenant to give it.
- c) When we say that people 'speak freely', we are attributing liberty not to the voice or pronunciation but to the man, who was not obliged by any law to speak otherwise than he did.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

- d) The use of the phrase ‘free will’ attributes liberty not to a man’s will, desire, or inclination, but to the man himself, whose liberty consists in his meeting no obstacle to his doing what he has the will, desire, or inclination to do.

Liberty is consistent with fear: when a man throws his goods into the sea for fear the ship should sink, he does it very willingly, and can refuse to do it if he so desires; so it is the action of someone who is free. Sometimes a man pays a debt only out of fear of imprisonment; but because nobody prevented him from keeping the money, paying it was the action of a man at liberty. Quite generally, all the things that men do in commonwealths out of fear of the law are actions which the doers were free to omit and so they were actions freely performed.

Liberty is consistent with necessity: water has not only the liberty but the necessity of flowing down the channel. The same holds for the actions that men voluntarily do: because they come from their will, they come from liberty, and yet they also come from necessity, because every act of man’s will and every desire and inclination comes from some cause, which comes from another cause, and so on backwards in a continual chain whose first link is in the hand of God, the first of all causes. So that to someone who could see the connection of all those causes, the necessity of all men’s voluntary actions would seem obvious...’

Compatibilism, Extract Two

John Locke, from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, Chap 21

In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com

- 8 A man is free to the extent that he has the power to think or not, to move or not, according to the preference or direction of his own mind. (The only actions of which we have any idea boil down to thinking and moving, which is why I mention only them.) Whenever it is not equally in a man’s power to do something or not to do it — whenever doing it or not doing it will not equally follow from the preference of his mind directing it — he isn’t free, isn’t at liberty, is under necessity. Thus, there can’t be liberty where there is no thought, no volition, no will; but there may be thought, will, volition, where there is no liberty. Some examples make this clear.
- 9 Nobody thinks that a tennis-ball, whether moving because it has been hit or lying still on the ground, is a free agent. Why? Because we do not think of a tennisball as thinking or (therefore) as having any volition, any preference of motion to rest or vice versa. Lacking volition, the ball comes under our idea of necessary, and that is how we describe it. Another example: a man is crossing a bridge when it collapses, pitching him into the river below; he doesn’t have liberty in this, and isn’t a free agent. He does have volition, and prefers his not falling to his falling, but not-falling isn’t within his power and so doesn’t follow from his volition; and therefore in this matter he isn’t free. A third example: a man strikes himself or a friend through a convulsive movement of his arm that it is not in his power — by volition or the direction of his mind — to stop or refrain from; and nobody thinks he has liberty in this; everyone sympathizes with him, as acting by necessity and constraint.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

- 10 A fourth example: a man is carried while fast asleep into a room where there is a person he has been longing to see and speak with; and he is there locked in securely; when he awakes he is glad to find himself in such desirable company, which he stays in willingly, preferring his staying to his going away. Nobody will doubt, I think, that his staying is voluntary; and yet it is clear that being locked in he is not at liberty not to stay. So liberty is not an idea belonging to volition or preferring, but to the person's having the power of doing or not doing something, according to what the mind chooses or directs. Our idea of liberty reaches as far as that power and no further. The moment that power is restrained, or some compulsion removes one's ability to act or refrain from acting, liberty is extinguished.
- 14 If I am right about all this, consider whether it might help to put an end to the question 'Is man's will free or not?' This has been long agitated, but I think it is unreasonable because unintelligible. It follows from what I have said that the question itself is as improper and meaningless as 'Is man's sleep swift or not?' and 'Is man's virtue square or not?' because liberty no more applies to the will than swiftness of motion does to sleep or squareness to virtue. Liberty, which is a power, belongs only to agents, and cannot be an attribute of the will, which is only another power.
- 15 Clearly, volition is an act of the mind knowingly exerting that control it takes itself to have over any part of the man, so that we can't will ourselves to fly because we know that we can't do so...
- 16 Plainly the will is simply one power or ability, and freedom is another; so that to ask whether the will has freedom is to ask whether one power has another power, whether one ability has another ability — a question too obviously and grossly absurd to argue about or to need an answer. For anyone can see that powers belong only to agents, and are attributes only of substances, and not of powers themselves? So that the question 'Is the will free?' contains the question 'Is the will a substance, an agent?', since freedom can properly be attributed only to acting substances. If freedom can with any propriety of speech be applied to any power, it is to the power a man has to affect movements of parts of his body by his choice or preference. But his having that power is what entitles him to be called 'free'; indeed, that power is freedom. So now we have the question 'Is freedom free?', and if anyone asked that, we would conclude that he didn't know what he was talking about. It would be like someone who, knowing that 'rich' was a word to express the possession of riches, asks 'Are riches rich?' — making himself a candidate for Midas's ears!

Compatibilism, Extract Three

Harry Frankfurt, from *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*
Reprinted in *Free Will*, ed Robert Kane, pub. Blackwell Publishers, 2002

To identify an agent's will is either to identify the desire (or desires) by which he is motivated in some action he performs or to identify the desire (or desires) by which he will or would be motivated when or if he acts. An agent's will, then is identical with one or more of his first-order desires. But the notion of the will, as I am employing it, is not coextensive with the notion of first-order desires... it is the notion of an effective desire — one that moves the will or would move a person all the way to action...

Someone has a desire of the second order either when he wants simply to have a certain desire or when he wants a certain desire to be his will. In situations of the latter kind, I shall call his second-order desires 'second-order volitions'...

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

We do not suppose that animals enjoy freedom of the will, although we recognize that an animal may be free to run in whatever direction it wants. Thus, having the freedom to do what one wants to do is not a sufficient condition of having a free will. It is not a necessary condition either. For to deprive someone of his freedom of action is not necessarily to undermine the freedom of the will...

When we ask whether a person's will is free we are not asking whether he is in a position to translate his first-order desires into actions. That is the question of whether he is free to do as he pleases. The question of the freedom of his will does not concern the relation between what he does and what he wants to do. Rather, it concerns his desires themselves...

It seems both natural and useful to construe the question of whether a person's will is free in close analogy to the question of whether an agent enjoys freedom of action. Now freedom of action is... the freedom to do what one wants to do. Analogously, then, the statement that a person enjoys freedom of the will means...that he is free to want what he wants to want. More precisely, it means that he is free to will what he wants to will, or to have the will he wants...

It is in securing the conformity of his will to his second-order volitions, then, that a person exercises freedom of the will... The unwilling addict's will is not free. This is shown by the fact that it is not the will he wants...

My conception of the freedom of the will appears to be neutral with regard to the problem of determinism. It seems conceivable that it should be causally determined that a person is free to want what he wants to want. If this is conceivable, then it might be causally determined that a person enjoys a free will. There is no more than an innocuous appearance of paradox in the proposition that it is determined, ineluctably and by forces beyond their control, that a certain people have free wills and that others do not. There is no incoherence in the proposition that some agency other than a person's own is responsible (even *morally* responsible) for the fact that he enjoys or fails to enjoy freedom of the will. It is possible that a person should be morally responsible for what he does of his own free will and that some other person should also be morally responsible for his having done it.

On the other hand, it seems conceivable that it should come about by chance that a person is free to have the will he wants. If this is conceivable, then it might be a matter of chance that certain people enjoy freedom of the will and that certain others do not...

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the Statement of Standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

In this Unit candidates must develop an understanding of a specific metaphysical debate and positions adopted in relation to that debate. They must choose to study **either** the debate concerning the existence of God **or** the free will/determinism debate. Candidates must then critically analyse and evaluate specific positions which are relevant to the chosen debate.

Candidates must be familiar with and use philosophical terms which are relevant to their chosen debate.

As already stated, **there is a choice of option to be studied**. All candidates **must** investigate **one** of the following philosophical debates:

EITHER

Debate 1: Is there a rational basis for belief in God?

OR

Debate 2: Do we have free will?

Candidates must study specific positions in relation to the chosen debate. They must not simply learn to describe these positions but must also be able to evaluate these positions by identifying weaknesses in the relevant arguments and by discussing their relative merits. For this reason **it is essential that candidates can explain the stages of reasoning and the assumptions on which the positions they study are based. It is also essential that candidates can present a clear conclusion on the merits of each position which is based on prior analysis.**

The mandatory content to be covered when studying **either** Debate One **or** Debate Two is outlined below.

Content

all candidates must study **either** Debate 1 **or** Debate 2.

Debate 1: Is there a rational basis for belief in God?

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| a) | The universe requires an ultimate explanation | The Cosmological Argument from Causation of Thomas Aquinas
Argument from Sufficient reason: Leibniz
Kalam Cosmological Argument |
| b) | Apparent order and purpose in the universe requires an explanation | The Teleological Argument of William Paley
Cosmic Fine-Tuning |

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

- c) It is self-contradictory to deny that there exists The Ontological Argument of St.
 Anselm
 a greatest possible being:

Debate 2: Do we have free will?

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|--|
| a) | Libertarianism: | The argument from first principles:
Reid Agent Causation |
| b) | Hard determinism: | The scientific basis for determinism
The argument for incompatibilism |
| c) | Compatibilism: | Freedom defined as freedom from
constraint First and second order
desires: Frankfurt |

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

Glossary

Candidates must be familiar with the following terms.

For the existence of God

A posteriori:

Knowable or justified from experience.

A priori:

Knowable or justified independently of experience.

Contingent:

A reference to something that could have been otherwise.

Cosmological argument:

A type of argument that makes an inference from observations of the world (or cosmos) to a unique being (God).

Fine tuning:

This is the idea that the physical constants of the universe exist in such a precise and narrow range of parameters that even a minute shift in one of these would result in drastically different instances of life, matter or astronomy from those with which we are currently familiar.

Great Chain of Being:

The idea, beginning with Aristotle, that there exists a hierarchical classification system of all beings from the most basic, right up to the perfect being (God) at the top.

Infinite regression:

A series of causes or explanations in which each item in the series requires the preceding item to explain it but where there is no possibility of a first item that can begin the series.

Necessary:

A reference to something that could not have been otherwise.

Ontological argument:

An a priori argument that seek to prove the existence of God from sources other than the observable world.

Potential infinite:

A set to which elements can be added without limit.

Principle of Sufficient Reason:

This is the principle that there must be a sufficient reason – causal or otherwise – for why whatever exists or occurs does so, and does so in the place, time and manner that it does

Reductio ad Absurdum:

A type of argument which shows that a claim, assumed for the sake of the argument, is false because it leads to an absurd or obviously false conclusion.

Teleological:

The idea, from the Greek word telos, that everything strives towards a purpose or goal.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

For free will / determinism

Agent causation:

A supposed form of causation argued for by Libertarians whereby agents can initiate a new causal chain without the agents themselves being causally determined.

Compatibilism:

The position that even in a fully deterministic world it is possible for free will to exist.

Consequence argument:

The incompatibilist argument that if determinism is true then our acts are the consequence of laws of nature and events in the remote past. But it is not up to us what went on before we were born, and neither is it up to us what the laws of nature are. Therefore, the consequences of these things (including our present acts) are not up to us."

Determinism:

The position that all events, including those that make up human behaviour and thinking, are caused to occur by prior sufficient causes.

Event causation:

The form of causation whereby an event occurs because it has been caused by a prior event.

First order desires:

A desire for anything other than a desire, eg the desire for a drink of water or the desire to see a particular film.

First principle:

A foundational proposition that cannot be derived or explained from any other proposition.

Frankfurt example:

A class of examples, named after Harry Frankfurt, designed to challenge the Principle of Alternative Possibilities. In a Frankfurt example an agent is deemed morally responsible but is not able to act differently to the way they do act.

Freedom of action:

The freedom to perform the actions we want to perform.

Freedom of the will:

Often used synonymously with 'freedom of action' but distinguished by Frankfurt to mean the freedom to have the will that we want to have.

Hard determinism:

The position that determinism and free will are incompatible, that determinism is true, and that, therefore, there is no free will.

Incompatibilism:

The position that determinism and free will are incompatible, ie that if one is true then the other is false.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Philosophy: Metaphysics (Higher)

Libertarianism:

The position that determinism and free will are incompatible, that determinism is false, and that we do possess free will.

Principle of alternative possibilities:

The position that an agent is morally responsible for an action only if they could have done otherwise.

Second order desires:

The desire to have a particular desire.

Soft determinism:

Usually used as synonymous with ‘compatibilism’.

National Unit Specification: general information



UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

CODE F8K7 12

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Higher Philosophy Course, but it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit offers progression for candidates who have studied the Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Units. It is also suitable as a higher level introduction for those who have no background in the subject. The issues studied in this Unit underlie many questions of both philosophical and general human interest such as ‘Can we know what other people are thinking and feeling?’, ‘Can we know about things that we haven’t experienced?’ and ‘Can we be certain that the world will continue to work in the way it does now?’

Candidates develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and investigate specific philosophical issues in the area of epistemology. They investigate three specific questions — ‘What is knowledge?’ ‘How is knowledge acquired?’ and ‘Can knowledge claims be justified?’ — and study specific extracts from the writings of **either** René Descartes **or** David Hume.

Specific philosophical questions, issues, positions and extracts are studied in this Unit but the critical thinking skills developed are relevant in a wide variety of contexts. These skills prepare candidates for the study of Philosophy in courses at Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Candidates will also be prepared for the study of any other subject which requires the critical analysis and evaluation of complex or abstract ideas. In addition, candidates will have demonstrated the skills necessary for entry into any field of employment where the ability to analyse issues and arguments, and evaluate complex or abstract ideas, is required.

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of philosophical issues in the area of epistemology.
- 2 Critically analyse a standard philosophical position in the area of epistemology.
- 3 Critically evaluate a standard philosophical position in the area of epistemology.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill — None

Core Skills component — Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate an understanding of philosophical issues in the area of epistemology

Performance Criteria

- (a) describe the tripartite theory of knowledge
- (b) describe specific philosophical problems associated with this theory
- (c) describe the key philosophical positions of scepticism, rationalism and empiricism

OUTCOME 2

Critically analyse a standard philosophical position in the area of epistemology

Performance Criteria

- (a) describe the account of knowledge given by one specific philosopher
- (b) explain the reasoning and assumptions on which this account is based
- (c) cite specific extracts from the writings of this philosopher in support of the explanation

OUTCOME 3

Critically evaluate a standard philosophical position in the area of epistemology

Performance Criteria

- (a) explain the strengths and weaknesses of the account of knowledge given by one specific philosopher
- (b) present a conclusion on the persuasiveness of this account of knowledge
- (c) state reasons in support of this conclusion which are based on evidence and sources previously discussed

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence which samples across the mandatory content. The evidence should be produced in response to a closed-book, supervised test with a time limit of one hour. It should be gathered on a single occasion.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted response questions together with a series of structured questions based on a section of prescribed text. The questions should sample across the mandatory content. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Approximately fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding and the remaining fifty percent available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation. The use of a cut-off score is appropriate for this assessment.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. When reassessment is required individual candidates should therefore attempt a new assessment in its entirety to ensure that a different range of mandatory content is sampled.

The standard to be applied, cut-off score and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

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 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

In this Unit candidates study specific philosophical issues in the area of Epistemology. They also study the positions of either René Descartes or David Hume. The Unit is divided into two Sections and a brief overview of each Section appears below:

Section 1:

There is no choice in this Section of the Unit and candidates **must** study **all** mandatory content.

Candidates investigate three questions which are relevant in the area of epistemology. The three questions are:

- ◆ What is knowledge?
- ◆ How is knowledge acquired?
- ◆ Can knowledge claims be justified?

Section 2:

In this Section of the Unit there is a **choice of option** to be studied. Candidates investigate **either** a specific rationalist **or** a specific empiricist epistemological position. The options are:

- ◆ Option A — Descartes' Rationalism

OR

- ◆ Option B — Hume's Empiricism

Candidates must study all mandatory content in relation to their **chosen** option.

The positions adopted by each philosopher are based on reasoning and assumptions which can only properly be understood by examining the writings of the relevant philosopher. Candidates must therefore investigate the chosen position by studying key extracts from the writings of that philosopher. **The key extracts are prescribed.**

A detailed outline of all mandatory content for each Section, including the key extracts for Section 2, can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of these Support Notes.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Throughout their study of this Unit, candidates will encounter philosophical terms which are relevant to the study of epistemological issues. Candidates will be expected to be familiar with and use such philosophical terms when discussing the issues involved. A glossary containing relevant terminology can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards.

In **Section 1** candidates gain an understanding of some time-honoured issues in the area of epistemology. These issues are abstract in nature therefore care must be taken to illustrate them in a way that is accessible to Higher candidates. The illustrations used are a matter for the professional judgement of the teacher or lecturer in light of the resources available and his/her knowledge of the prior experience of candidates. They might involve reading and discussing accessible philosophical texts, drawing on experiences or scenarios which will be familiar to candidates or investigating contemporary fictional treatments of the issues.

In **Section 2**, candidates study **one** option from **a choice of two**. The option chosen is a matter for the professional judgement of the teacher or lecturer in light of the resources available and his/her knowledge of the prior experience of candidates. Candidates can apply their understanding of the issues in Section 1, when critically analysing and evaluating the chosen position.

Candidates must also critically analyse the reasoning and assumptions on which the position chosen in Section 2 is based. For this reason, it is essential that candidates are very familiar with all prescribed extracts. Although specific versions of philosophical texts are prescribed and extracts from these versions will appear in both unit and course assessment teachers and lecturers should use their professional judgement as to whether some of the philosophical ideas might be taught more effectively using other versions such as those prepared by Jonathan Bennett and presented at www.earlymoderntext.com.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

Some of the content of this Unit can also be studied in the Intermediate 2 *Epistemology* Unit. If a centre makes the judgement that the Intermediate 2 Unit would be more appropriate for a particular candidate, the candidate can be assessed at that level without difficulty. However, it should be noted that there are differences in the skills assessed at that level.

If candidates have already studied the Intermediate 2 *Epistemology* Unit there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have already acquired. However, it may be advisable to choose a different Option in Section 2 at Higher level. This will help to maintain student motivation and interest. It will also allow candidates to develop their knowledge and skills in a different context.

For candidates who study this Unit as part of the Higher Course, there are significant opportunities to integrate knowledge and/or skills in the remaining three Units. Understanding of key terms and issues in the area of epistemology are also relevant when studying the *Moral Philosophy* and *Metaphysics* Units. In addition, the skills acquired during the study of the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit will help candidates to analyse and evaluate the issues, positions and reasoning which they study in this Unit. The skills of critical analysis and evaluation apply to all four Units in the Course. Candidates will have many opportunities to adapt and refine them in a variety of contexts while studying the Course.

Guidance on induction and a variety of classroom activities can be found in the ‘Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course’ in the Course Details.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are outlined in the ‘Evidence Requirements for the Unit’ in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of all mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an end of Unit test.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted response questions together with a series of structured questions based on a section of prescribed text. The questions should sample across the mandatory content and should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Approximately fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding and the remaining fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for Critical Analysis and Evaluation.

Appropriate instruments of assessment, marking schemes and cut-off scores are contained in the National Assessment Bank items for this Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

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

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit

In this Unit candidates must develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and investigate specific philosophical issues in the area of epistemology. They must investigate three questions — ‘What is knowledge?’ ‘How is knowledge acquired?’ and ‘Can knowledge claims be justified?’ — and study the position adopted by **either** René Descartes **or** David Hume in relation to these questions. The chosen position must be studied with reference to key extracts from the writings of the relevant philosopher. The issues to be studied, relevant positions and key extracts are detailed under the content for Sections 1 and 2 of this Appendix. Candidates must study all content in Section 1 and the epistemological position of **either** René Descartes **or** David Hume **in Section 2**.

Candidates must be familiar with and use philosophical terms which are relevant to both Section 1 and their chosen option in Section 2.

A glossary of terms with which the candidate must be familiar is provided at the end of this appendix.

Section 1:

Candidates must study all content in this Section. Candidates are introduced to specific philosophical issues in the area of epistemology. Candidates study the tripartite theory of knowledge and specific problems associated with this theory, including the challenge of scepticism.

Candidates also develop knowledge and understanding of two specific standard epistemological positions. The two positions studied are rationalism and empiricism. Both positions suggest that knowledge claims can be justified but rely on arguments which claim that justification is achieved through different sources. The empiricist position also suggests that factual and significant knowledge is limited to that which can be known through sense experience while the rationalist position suggests that reason can also provide such knowledge without reference to sense experience.

During their study of the mandatory content of Section 1, candidates gain an understanding of philosophical issues in the area of epistemology. Candidates can apply their understanding of the issues in Section 1, when critically analysing and evaluating the chosen position.

The specific positions and the key features which must be studied are outlined below:

What is knowledge?

- ◆ Epistemology has been primarily concerned with propositional knowledge.
- ◆ In the Tripartite Theory of Knowledge the criteria are taken to be individually necessary and jointly sufficient.
- ◆ Scepticism challenges the possibility of satisfying the justification criterion.
- ◆ The Gettier problem challenges the claim that the criteria are jointly sufficient.

How is knowledge acquired?

- ◆ Rationalism: some useful knowledge can be acquired through reason alone.
- ◆ Empiricism: all useful knowledge is gained through the senses.
- ◆ Innate ideas: Candidates should be familiar with
 - Locke’s metaphor of the mind as a blank sheet of paper and his arguments against innate ideas.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

- Leibniz’s claim that ideas are innate as potentialities and his metaphor of the veined block of marble.

Can knowledge claims be justified?

- ◆ The infinite regress of justification and the foundationalist and coherentist responses.
- ◆ Empiricism and Rationalism as foundationalist responses.

Students who choose to study Descartes in section 2 should be prepared to discuss how successful Descartes is in responding to the sceptical challenge.

Students who choose to study Hume in section 2 should be prepared to discuss to what extent Hume has avoided scepticism.

Section 2:

There is a choice of option in Section 2. All candidates must investigate **one** of the following options:

EITHER

The study of a rationalist epistemological position through an examination of key extracts from the writings of René Descartes.

OR

The study of an empiricist epistemological position through an examination of key extracts from the writings of David Hume.

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UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

By examining key extracts from the writings of the chosen philosopher, candidates will be able to identify the reasoning and assumptions which give rise to the standard positions of either rationalism or empiricism. Candidates must not simply learn to describe the ideas of the chosen philosopher. They must also develop the ability to identify key stages, key assumptions and weaknesses in the chosen philosopher's position. **For this reason, it is essential that candidates explain and, where appropriate, criticise the stages of reasoning and the assumptions which are present in each of the extracts prescribed in this Section.**

The mandatory content to be covered in relation to each option is outlined below:

Option A: Descartes' Rationalism

Searching for a reliable foundation for knowledge:

Mistrust of the Senses	Meditation 1
The Dream Argument	Meditation 1
The Evil Genius Argument	Meditation 1

Reason as the foundation of knowledge:

The Cogito	Meditation 2
God as guarantor of clear and distinct perceptions	Meditation 3

Refuting sceptical arguments:

God is no deceiver therefore material reality exists	Meditation 6
Errors in sense perception can be recognised and corrected	Meditation 6
Refuting the Dream Argument	Meditation 6

Option B: Hume's Empiricism

The origin of ideas:

Perceptions: Impressions and Ideas	Section II
Simple and Complex Ideas	Section II
The Missing Shade of Blue	Section II

What we can know:

Implicit rejection of Innate Ideas	Section II
Relations of Ideas and Matters of Fact (Hume's Fork)	Section IV: I

Knowledge about the world:

Habit and Custom	Section IV: II
The Reason of Animals	Section IX

Prescribed Texts

The following versions of the philosophical texts are prescribed and extracts from these versions will appear in both Unit and Course assessment:

Meditations on First Philosophy: René Descartes
Translated by Donald Cress, Hackett 1993

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: David Hume
Hackett 1993

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UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

Glossary

Candidates must be familiar with the following terms.

General Epistemological concepts

A posteriori:

Knowable or justified from experience.

A priori:

Knowable or justified independently of experience.

Coherentist theory of justification:

The view that justification depends on how a particular set of beliefs relate to one another rather than on whether a chain of reasoning rests on foundational beliefs.

Contingent:

A reference to something that could have been otherwise.

Empirical knowledge:

Knowledge gained through the senses experience.

Empiricism:

An approach to philosophy which claims that knowledge is based on sense experience, that knowledge is not innate, and that knowledge cannot be discovered by reason alone.

Epistemology:

The study of knowledge, its nature and how it is acquired.

Foundationalism:

A position in epistemology which claims that there are some self-justifying beliefs that ultimately provide the justification for all other true beliefs.

Gettier problem:

A problem in epistemology first clearly set out by Edmund Gettier. The Gettier problem challenges the claim that the criteria in the Tripartite Theory of Knowledge are jointly sufficient.

Innate idea:

An idea that is inborn and not the product of experience.

Necessary:

A reference to something that could not have been otherwise.

Rationalism:

An approach to philosophy which claims that some knowledge of the external world can be established by correct reasoning and without the use of sense experience.

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UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

Scepticism:

The view that knowledge is impossible to attain because it is not possible for any knowledge claim to be properly justified.

Tabula rasa / blank slate:

A reference to Locke's claim that there are no innate ideas and his metaphor of the mind as a blank sheet of paper.

The infinite regress of justification:

The problem that claims to knowledge can never be justified as any attempt at supplying a justification merely makes another claim that in turn also needs to be justified.

Tripartite Theory of Knowledge:

The theory that knowledge consists of justified true beliefs and that these criteria are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for knowledge.

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UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

For Descartes

Cartesian:

The adjective from 'Descartes'. Used to describe philosophical and other ideas related to Descartes.

Cartesian circle:

The name given to a particular objection to Descartes' argument. Descartes needs the notion of clear and distinct perception to move beyond the Cogito but needs God to guarantee the reliability of clear and distinct perception.

Cartesian Doubt:

The sceptical method used by Descartes in which any belief that is not certain is treated as false.

Causal adequacy principle:

The principle that the cause of an object must contain at least as much reality as the object itself.

Clear and distinct perception:

In the Principles Descartes says that a 'clear' perception is one that is present and manifest to the attentive mind and that a 'distinct' perception is one that is so separated from all other perceptions that it contains absolutely nothing except what is clear.

Cogito:

Latin for 'I think'. Used as a way of referring to Descartes' argument that he cannot doubt his own existence

Evil Genius:

A hypothetical entity used by Descartes to maintain the possibility that we are constantly being deceived.

Method of doubt:

Descartes' attempt to arrive at certainty by systematically doubting everything until he discovered something that could not be doubted.

Trademark Argument:

Descartes' argument that God must exist because we have an idea of God and that idea must have been implanted there by God as a kind of trademark.

For Hume

Complex Idea:

An idea that is built up from other ideas.

Constant conjunction:

When two or more things are always found together.

Hume's Fork:

A reference to Hume's distinction between 'Relation of Ideas' and 'Matters of Fact'.

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UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

Impression:

A term invented by Hume to refer to any direct perception of the mind. A perception that involves actually hearing, feeling or the experience of an emotion, etc., rather than just thinking about these things.

Inward sentiment:

An impression that is caused by our feelings or emotions.

Induction:

Generalising from a limited range of cases.

Matters of fact:

Statements about the world that are based on experience.

Outward sentiment:

An impression that results from the operation of the senses.

Perception of the mind:

Hume's term for any content of the mind of which we are conscious whether an impression or an idea.

Relations of ideas:

Propositions that can be discovered purely by thinking, with no need to attend to anything that actually exists anywhere in the universe.

Simple Idea:

A copy of an impression. A perception of the mind that is weaker and less vivid than an impression.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

CODE F8K6 12

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Higher Philosophy Course, but it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit offers progression for candidates who have studied the Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Units. It is also suitable as a higher level introduction for those who have no background in the subject. Candidates develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand theories in the area of moral philosophy. The theories and positions studied in this Unit are of both philosophical and general human interest. They are relevant to such questions as ‘How can we decide the way we should act?’ and ‘Why is it difficult to agree a common approach to moral issues?’

Specific normative theories are studied in this Unit but the critical thinking skills developed are relevant in a wide variety of contexts. These skills prepare candidates for the study of Philosophy in courses at Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Candidates will also be prepared for the study of any other subject which requires the critical analysis and evaluation of complex or abstract issues. In addition, candidates will have demonstrated the skills necessary for entry into any field of employment where the ability to analyse issues and arguments, and evaluate complex or abstract ideas, is required. They will also have demonstrated an awareness of the complexity involved in ethical judgements.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of normative moral theories.
- 2 Critically analyse normative moral theories.
- 3 Critically evaluate normative moral theories.

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill — None

Core Skills component — Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate an understanding of normative moral theories

Performance Criteria

- (a) describe specific normative moral theories
- (b) refer to moral issues as part of these descriptions

OUTCOME 2

Critically analyse normative moral theories

Performance Criteria

- (a) explain the reasoning and assumptions on which specific normative theories are based
- (b) explain the implication of these theories when making moral judgements
- (c) refer to moral issues as part of this analysis

OUTCOME 3

Critically evaluate normative moral theories

Performance Criteria

- (a) explain the strengths and weaknesses of specific normative moral theories
- (b) refer to moral issues as part of this explanation
- (c) present a conclusion on the relative merits of specific normative moral theories
- (d) state reasons in support of this conclusion which are based on aspects already discussed

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence which samples across the mandatory content of the Unit. The evidence should be produced in response to a closed-book, supervised test with a time limit of one hour. It should be gathered on a single occasion.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content and allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Approximately fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding with the remaining fifty percent of the marks available awarded for critical analysis and evaluation. The use of a cut-off score is appropriate for this assessment.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. When reassessment is required individual candidates should therefore attempt a new assessment in its entirety to ensure that a different range of mandatory content is sampled.

The standard to be applied, cut-off score and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

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 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates must study **ALL** content. A brief overview appears below:

Candidates investigate two specific normative moral theories which illustrate both a **consequentialist** and a **deontological** approach to moral judgements. The specific theories are:

- ◆ the consequentialist theory of Utilitarianism as illustrated by the ideas of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill
- ◆ the deontological theory of Immanuel Kant

Questions in Unit and Course assessment will sample across the mandatory content of this Unit. It is therefore of vital importance that candidates are familiar with **all** mandatory content. A detailed outline of the mandatory content can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards at the end of this Unit Specification.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Throughout their study of this Unit, candidates will encounter philosophical terms which are relevant to the study of normative moral theories. Candidates should be encouraged to become familiar with and use relevant philosophical terms when discussing the issues involved and completing written tasks. A Glossary containing relevant terminology can be found in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Candidates will gain an understanding of two specific normative moral theories which illustrate both a consequentialist and a deontological approach to moral judgements. The concepts involved are abstract in nature therefore care must be taken to illustrate them in a way that is accessible to Higher candidates. Further, it is a requirement of both Unit and Course assessment that candidates refer to moral issues when describing, analysing and evaluating these theories. Teachers and lecturers should therefore illustrate the theories, related concepts and criticisms with reference to moral issues and scenarios. **However, it is important to avoid an in-depth study of specific moral issues; illustrations should focus only on aspects of the moral issues or scenarios that will help candidates to understand the specific theories, concepts and criticisms they study.**

The moral issues and scenarios chosen for illustration are a matter for the professional judgement of the teacher or lecturer in light of the resources available and his/her knowledge of the prior experience of candidates. They should be directly relevant to the aspects of the theories being examined and be chosen to stimulate discussion and promote understanding.

For example:

- ◆ the problem of justice, in relation to Utilitarianism, might be illustrated with reference to crime and punishment. Candidates could examine the implications of the Greatest Happiness Principle in relation to whether it is better to ‘punish’ an innocent person in order to deter others, rather than allow a crime to appear to go unpunished. They could also discuss the different conclusions which might be reached by applying an Act or Rule Utilitarian approach
- ◆ the problem of ignoring consequences, in relation to Kant, could be illustrated with reference to a scenario in which a vulnerable, innocent person is being sought by a cruel authority. In order to save the innocent person it is necessary to lie, but lying would go against Kant’s principle of Universalisability. Candidates could also discuss the problem of competing duties in relation to such a case

It is of vital importance that candidates do not simply learn to describe the normative theories and the criticisms they study, but also learn to critically analyse, evaluate and apply them.

Discussion of Utilitarianism should involve consideration of the arguments for hedonism, counter arguments and an awareness of possible amendments to the theory. Analysis of Kantian ethics should involve the candidates distinguishing between the Kantian notion of duty and the more commonly understood notion of duty; and distinguishing between treating someone as a means and treating someone as a means only. Candidates should be able to consider whether supporters of the theories might have a suitable response to any criticisms that have been made of the theory.

Some of the content in this Unit can also be studied in the Intermediate 2 *Moral Philosophy* Unit. If a centre makes the judgement that the Intermediate 2 Unit would be more appropriate for a particular candidate, the candidate can be assessed at that level without difficulty. However, it should be noted that there are differences in the skills assessed at that level. If candidates have already studied the Intermediate 2 *Moral Philosophy* Unit there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have already acquired.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

For candidates who study this Unit as part of the Higher Course, there are significant opportunities to integrate knowledge and/or skills in the remaining three Units. The skills of critical analysis and evaluation apply to all Units in the Course. Candidates will have many opportunities to adapt and refine these skills when using them in a variety of contexts.

Guidance on setting the climate for effective learning and teaching, and a variety of classroom activities, can be found in the ‘Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course’ in the Course Details.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are outlined in the Evidence Requirements for the Unit and in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of all mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an end of Unit test.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by extended and restricted response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Approximately fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding and the remaining fifty percent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation.

Appropriate instruments of assessment, marking schemes and cut-off scores are contained in the National Assessment Bank items for this Unit.

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

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

SOURCES

The following sources are provided to exemplify the philosophical positions and arguments that candidates are required to study.

Utilitarianism, Extract One

Jeremy Bentham, from *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*.

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do...

By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness, (all this in the present case comes to the same thing) or (what comes again to the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered: if that party be the community in general, then the happiness of the community: if a particular individual, then the happiness of that individual...

The community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members. The interest of the community then is what? — the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it...

Utilitarianism, Extract Two

Jeremy Bentham, from *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*.

- I Pleasures then, and the avoidance of pains, are the ends that the legislator has in view; it behoves him therefore to understand their value. Pleasures and pains are the instruments he has to work with: it behoves him therefore to understand their force, which is again, in other words, their value.
- II To a person considered by himself, the value of a pleasure or pain considered by itself, will be greater or less, according to the four following circumstances:
 - 1 Its intensity.
 - 2 Its duration.
 - 3 Its certainty or uncertainty.
 - 4 Its propinquity or remoteness.
- III These are the circumstances which are to be considered in estimating a pleasure or a pain considered each of them by itself. But when the value of any pleasure or pain is considered for the purpose of estimating the tendency of any act by which it is produced, there are two other circumstances to be taken into the account; these are:
 - 5 Its fecundity, or the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the same kind: that is, pleasures, if it be a pleasure: pains, if it be a pain.
 - 6 Its purity, or the chance it has of not being followed by sensations of the opposite kind: that is, pains, if it be a pleasure: pleasures, if it be a pain.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

These two last, however, are in strictness scarcely to be deemed properties of the pleasure or the pain itself; they are not, therefore, in strictness to be taken into the account of the value of that pleasure or that pain. They are in strictness to be deemed properties only of the act, or other event, by which such pleasure or pain has been produced; and accordingly are only to be taken into the account of the tendency of such act or such event.

IV To a number of persons, with reference to each of whom to the value of a pleasure or a pain is considered, it will be greater or less, according to seven circumstances: to wit, the six preceding ones; viz.

- 1 Its intensity.
- 2 Its duration.
- 3 Its certainty or uncertainty.
- 4 Its propinquity or remoteness.
- 5 Its fecundity.
- 6 Its purity.

And one other; to wit:

- 7 Its extent; that is, the number of persons to whom it extends; or (in other words) who are affected by it.

V To take an exact account then of the general tendency of any act, by which the interests of a community are affected, proceed as follows. Begin with any one person of those whose interests seem most immediately to be affected by it: and take an account,

- 1 Of the value of each distinguishable pleasure which appears to be produced by it in the first instance.
- 2 Of the value of each pain which appears to be produced by it in the first instance.
- 3 Of the value of each pleasure which appears to be produced by it after the first. This constitutes the fecundity of the first pleasure and the impurity of the first pain.
- 4 Of the value of each pain which appears to be produced by it after the first. This constitutes the fecundity of the first pain, and the impurity of the first pleasure.
- 5 Sum up all the values of all the pleasures on the one side, and those of all the pains on the other. The balance, if it be on the side of pleasure, will give the good tendency of the act upon the whole, with respect to the interests of that individual person; if on the side of pain, the bad tendency of it upon the whole.
- 6 Take an account of the number of persons whose interests appear to be concerned; and repeat the above process with respect to each. Sum up the numbers expressive of the degrees of good tendency, which the act has, with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is good upon the whole: do this again with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is bad upon the whole. Take the balance which if on the side of pleasure, will give the general good tendency of the act, with respect to the total

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

number or community of individuals concerned; if on the side of pain, the general evil tendency, with respect to the same community.

- VI It is not to be expected that this process should be strictly pursued previously to every moral judgment, or to every legislative or judicial operation. It may, however, be always kept in view: and as near as the process actually pursued on these occasions approaches to it, so near will such process approach to the character of an exact one.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Utilitarianism, Extract Three

John Stuart Mill, from *Utilitarianism*.

Now, such a theory of life excites in many minds, and among them in some of the most estimable in feeling and purpose, inveterate dislike. To suppose that life has (as they express it) no higher end than pleasure—no better and nobler object of desire and pursuit—they designate as utterly mean and grovelling; as a doctrine worthy only of swine... the accusation supposes human beings to be capable of no pleasures except those of which swine are capable... if the sources of pleasure were precisely the same to human beings and to swine, the rule of life which is good enough for the one would be good enough for the other... (however)... Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification... It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognise the fact, that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone.

If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality, so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account.

Now it is an unquestionable fact that those who are equally acquainted with, and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying, both, do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties. Few human creatures would consent to be changed into any of the lower animals, for a promise of the fullest allowance of a beast's pleasures; no intelligent human being would consent to be a fool, no instructed person would be an ignoramus, no person of feeling and conscience would be selfish and base, even though they should be persuaded that the fool, the dunce, or the rascal is better satisfied with his lot than they are with theirs. They would not resign what they possess more than he for the most complete satisfaction of all the desires which they have in common with him. If they ever fancy they would, it is only in cases of unhappiness so extreme, that to escape from it they would exchange their lot for almost any other, however undesirable in their own eyes. A being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering, and certainly accessible to it at more points, than one of an inferior type; but in spite of these liabilities, he can never really wish to sink into what he feels to be a lower grade of existence... It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.

It may be objected, that many who are capable of the higher pleasures, occasionally, under the influence of temptation, postpone them to the lower. But this is quite compatible with a full appreciation of the intrinsic superiority of the higher. Men often, from infirmity of character, make their election for the nearer good, though they know it to be the less valuable; and this no less when the choice is between two bodily pleasures, than when it is between bodily and mental. They pursue sensual indulgences to the injury of health, though perfectly aware that health is the greater good...

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

From this verdict of the only competent judges, I apprehend there can be no appeal. On a question which is the best worth having of two pleasures, or which of two modes of existence is the most grateful to the feelings, apart from its moral attributes and from its consequences, the judgment of those who are qualified by knowledge of both, or, if they differ, that of the majority among them, must be admitted as final.

Utilitarianism, Extract Four

John Stuart Mill, from *Utilitarianism*.

The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible, is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible, is that people hear it: and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire it.

Utilitarianism, Extract Five

John Stuart Mill, from *Utilitarianism*.

No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. This, however, being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good: that each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons.

Utilitarianism, Extract Six

Robert Nozick, from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Blackwell, 1974)

Suppose there were an experience machine that would give you any experience you desired. Superduper neuropsychologists could stimulate your brain so that you would think and feel you were writing a great novel, or making a friend, or reading an interesting book. All the time you would be floating in a tank, with electrodes attached to your brain. Should you plug into this machine for life, preprogramming your life's experiences?...

What does matter to us in addition to our experiences? First, we want to do certain things, and not just have the experience of doing them. In the case of certain experiences, it is only because first we want to do the actions that we want the experiences of doing them or thinking we've done them...

A second reason for not plugging in is that we want to be a certain way, to be a certain sort of person. Someone floating in a tank is an indeterminate blob. There is no answer to the question of what a person is like who has long been in the tank. Is he courageous, kind, intelligent, witty, loving? It's not merely that it's difficult to tell; there's no way he is. Plugging into the machine is a kind of suicide...

Thirdly, plugging into an experience machine limits us to a man-made reality, to a world no deeper or more important than that which people can construct. There is no actual contact with any deeper reality, though the experience of it can be stimulated...

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Kantian Ethics, Extract One

Immanuel Kant, from *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*
In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com

[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Four ellipses.... indicate the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth.

Nothing in the world — *or out of it!* — can possibly be conceived that could be called ‘good’ without qualification except a GOOD WILL. Mental talents such as intelligence, wit, and judgment, and temperaments such as courage, resoluteness, and perseverance are doubtless in many ways good and desirable; but they can become extremely bad and harmful if the person’s *character* isn’t good — ie if the *will* that is to make use of these gifts of nature isn’t good. Similarly with gifts of fortune. Power, riches, honour, even health, and the over-all well-being and contentment with one’s condition that we call ‘happiness’, create pride, often leading to arrogance, if there isn’t a good will to correct their influence on the mind Not to mention the fact that the sight of someone who shows no sign of a pure and good will and yet enjoys uninterrupted prosperity will never give pleasure to an impartial rational observer. So it seems that without a good will one can’t even be worthy of being happy.

Even qualities that are conducive to this good will and can make its work easier have no intrinsic unconditional worth. We rightly hold them in high esteem, but only because we assume them to be accompanied by a good will; so we can’t take them to be absolutely ·or unconditionally· good. Moderation in emotions and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation not only are good in many ways but seem even to constitute part of the person’s *inner* worth, and they were indeed unconditionally valued by the ancients. Yet they are very far from being good without qualification — ·good in themselves, good in any circumstances· — for without the principles of a good will they can become extremely bad: ·for example·, a villain’s coolness makes him far more dangerous and more straightforwardly abominable to us than he would otherwise have seemed.

What makes a good will *good*? It isn’t what it brings about, its usefulness in achieving some intended end. Rather, good will is good because of *how it wills* — that is, it is *good in itself*. Taken just in itself it is to be valued incomparably more highly than anything that could be brought about by it in the satisfaction of some preference — or, if you like, the sum total of all preferences! Consider this case:

Through bad luck or a miserly endowment from stepmotherly nature, this person’s will has no power at all to accomplish its purpose; not even the greatest effort on his part would enable it to achieve anything it aims at. But he does still have a good will — not as a mere wish but as the summoning of all the means in his power.

The good will of this person would sparkle like a jewel all by itself, as something that had its full worth in itself. Its value wouldn’t go up or down depending on how useful or fruitless it was. If it was useful, that would only be the *setting* ·of the jewel·, so to speak, enabling us to handle it more conveniently in commerce (·a diamond ring is easier to manage than a diamond·) or to get those who don’t know much ·about jewels· to look at it. But the setting doesn’t affect the value ·of the jewel· and doesn’t recommend it the experts.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Kantian Ethics, Extract Two

Immanuel Kant, from *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*

In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com

My topic is the difference between doing something from duty and doing it for other reasons. In tackling this, I shall set aside without discussion two kinds of case — one for which my question doesn't arise, a second for which the question arises but is too easy to answer for the case to be interesting or instructive. Following those two, I shall introduce two further kinds of case.

- 1 I shan't discuss actions which — even if they are useful in some way or other — are clearly opposed to duty, because with them the question of doing them from duty doesn't even arise.
- 2 I shall also ignore cases where someone does A, which really is in accord with duty, but where what he directly wants isn't to perform A but to perform B which somehow leads to or involves A. For example: he (B) unbolts the door so as to escape from the fire, and in so doing he (A) enables others to escape also. There is no need to spend time on such cases, because in them it is easy to tell whether an action that is in accord with duty is done from duty or rather for some selfish purpose.
- 3 It is far harder to detect that difference when the action the person performs - one that is in accord with duty — is what he directly wanted to do, rather than being something he did only because it was involved in something else that he directly wanted to do. Take the example of a shop-keeper who charges the same prices for selling his goods to inexperienced customers as for selling them to anyone else. This is in accord with duty. But there is also a prudential and not-duty-based motive that the shop-keeper might have for this course of conduct: when there is a buyers' market, he may sell as cheaply to children as to others so as not to lose customers. Thus the customer is honestly served, but we can't infer from this that the shop-keeper has behaved in this way from duty and principles of honesty. His own advantage requires this behaviour, and we can't assume that in addition he directly wants something for his customers and out of love for them he charges them all the same price. His conduct of his policy on pricing comes neither from duty nor from directly wanting it, but from a selfish purpose.

[Kant's German really does say first that the shop-keeper isn't led by a direct want and then that he is. His point seems to be this:— The shop-keeper does want to treat all his customers equitably; his intention is aimed at precisely that fact about his conduct (unlike the case in (2) where the agent enables other people to escape but isn't aiming at that at all). But the shop-keeper's intention doesn't stop there, so to speak; he wants to treat his customers equitably not because of what he wants for them, but because of how he wants them to behave later in his interests. This involves a kind of indirectness, which doesn't assimilate this case to (2) but does distinguish it from a fourth kind of conduct that still isn't morally worthy but not because it involves the 'indirectness' of (2) or that of (3).]

- 4 It is a duty to preserve one's life, and moreover everyone directly wants to do so. But because of the power of that want, the often anxious care that most men have for their survival has no intrinsic worth, and the maxim Preserve yourself has no moral content. Men preserve their lives according to duty, but not from duty. But now consider this case:

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Adversities and hopeless sorrow have completely taken away this unfortunate man's relish for life. But his fate has not made him passively despondent or dejected. He is strong in soul, and is exasperated at how things have gone for him, and would like actively to do something about it. Specifically, he *wishes for death*. But he preserves his life without loving it, not led by any want or fear, but acting from duty.

For this person the maxim *Preserve yourself* has moral content.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

We have a duty to be charitably helpful where we can, and many people are so sympathetically constituted that without any motive of vanity or selfishness they find an inner satisfaction in spreading joy and take delight in the contentment of others if they have made it possible. But I maintain that such behaviour, done in that spirit, has no true moral worth, however amiable it may be and however much it accords with duty. It should be classed with actions done from other wants, such as the desire for honour. With luck, someone's desire for honour may lead to conduct that in fact accords with duty and does good to many people; in that case it deserves praise and encouragement; but it doesn't deserve high esteem, because the maxim on which the person is acting doesn't have the moral content of an action done not because the person *likes* acting in that way but from duty.

[In this context, 'want' and 'liking' and 'desire' are used to translate *Neigung*, elsewhere in this version translated as 'preference'; other translations mostly use 'inclination'.]

Now consider a special case:

This person has been a friend to mankind, but his mind has become clouded by a sorrow of his own that has extinguished all feeling for how others are faring. He still has the power to benefit others in distress, but their need leaves him untouched because he is too preoccupied with his own. But now he tears himself out of his dead insensibility and acts charitably purely from duty, without feeling any want or liking so to behave.

Now, for the first time, his conduct has genuine moral worth. Having been deprived by nature of a warm-hearted temperament, this man could find in himself a source from which to give himself a far higher worth than he could have got through such a temperament. It is just here that the worth of character is brought out, which is morally the incomparably highest of all: he is beneficent not from preference but from duty.

Kantian Ethics, Extract Three

Immanuel Kant, from *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*

In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com

So the universal imperative of duty can be expressed as follows: **Act as though the maxim of your action were to become, through your will, a universal law of nature.**

...

I want now to list some duties, adopting the usual division of them into duties to ourselves and duties to others, and into perfect duties and imperfect duties.

- 1 A man who has been brought by a series of troubles to the point of despair and of weariness with life still has his reason sufficiently to ask himself: 'Wouldn't it be contrary to my duty to myself to take my own life?' Now he asks: 'Could the maxim of my action in killing myself become a universal law of nature?' Well, here is his maxim:

For love of myself, I make it my principle to cut my life short when prolonging it threatens to bring more troubles than satisfactions.

So the question is whether *this* principle of self-love could become a universal law of nature. If it did, that would be a nature that had a law according to which a single feeling created a life affirming push and also led to the destruction of life itself; and we can see at a glance that such a 'nature' would contradict itself, and so couldn't be a nature. So the maxim we are discussing *couldn't* be a law of nature, and therefore would be utterly in conflict with the supreme principle of duty.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

- 2 Another man sees himself being driven by need to borrow money. He realizes that no-one will lend to him unless he firmly promises to repay it at a certain time, and he is well aware that he wouldn't be able to keep such a promise. He is disposed to make such a promise, but he has enough conscience to ask himself: 'Isn't it improper and opposed to duty to relieve one's needs in that way?' If he does decide to make the promise, the maxim of his action will run like this:

When I think I need money, I will borrow money and promise to repay it, although I know that the repayment won't ever happen.

Here he is —for the rest of this paragraph -reflecting on this— 'It may be that this principle of self-love or of personal advantage would fit nicely into my whole future welfare, so that there is no *prudential* case against it. But the question remains: would it be right? To answer this, I change the demand of self-love into a universal law, and then put the question like this: If my maxim became a universal law, *then* how would things stand? I can see straight off that it could never hold as a universal law of nature, and must contradict itself. For if you take a law saying that anyone who thinks he is in need can make any promises he likes without intending to keep them, and make it *universal* so that everyone in need *does* behave in this way, that would make the promise and the intended purpose of it *impossible* -no-one would believe what was promised to him but would only laugh at any such performance as a vain pretence.'

- 3 A third finds in himself a talent that could be developed so as to make him in many respects a useful person. But he finds himself in comfortable circumstances, and would rather indulge in pleasure than take the trouble to broaden and improve his fortunate natural gifts. But now he asks whether his maxim of neglecting his gifts, agreeing as it does with his liking for idle amusement, also agrees with what is called 'duty'. He sees that a system of nature conforming with this law could indeed exist, with everyone behaving like the Islanders of the south Pacific, letting their talents rust and devoting their lives merely to idleness, indulgence, and baby-making — in short, to pleasure. But he can't possibly will that this should become a universal law of nature or that it should be implanted in us by a natural instinct. For, as a rational being, he necessarily wills that all his abilities should be developed, because they serve him and are given to him for all sorts of possible purposes.

- 4 A fourth man, for whom things are going well, sees that others (whom he could help) have to struggle with great hardships, and he thinks to himself:

What concern of mine is it? Let each one be as happy as heaven wills, or as he can make himself; I won't take anything from him or even envy him; but I have no desire to contribute to his welfare or help him in time of need.

If such a way of thinking were a universal law of nature, the human race could certainly survive — and no doubt that *state* of humanity would be better than one where everyone chatters about sympathy and benevolence and exerts himself occasionally to practice them, while also taking every chance he can to cheat, and to betray or otherwise violate people's rights. But although it is possible that that maxim should *be* a universal law of nature, it is impossible to **will** that it do so. For a will that brought *that* about would conflict with itself, since instances can often arise in which the person in question would need the love and sympathy of others, and he would have no hope of getting the help he desires, being robbed of it by this law of nature springing from his own will.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Those are a few of the many duties that we have (or at least think we have) that can clearly be derived from the single principle that I have stated low on page 23 above. We must *be able to will* that a maxim of our action become a universal law; this is the general formula for the moral evaluation of our action. Some actions are so constituted that their maxim can't even be *thought* as a universal law of nature without contradiction, let alone being *willed* to be such. It's easy to see that an action of that kind conflicts with stricter or narrower (absolutely obligatory) duty. With other actions, the maxim-made-universal-law is not in that way internally impossible (self-contradictory), but it is still something that no-one could possibly *will* to be a universal law of nature, because such a will would contradict itself. It's easy to see that an action of that kind conflicts with broader (meritorious) duty.

Kantian Ethics, Extract Four

Immanuel Kant, from *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*

In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com

But suppose there were something *whose existence in itself* had absolute value, something which *as an end in itself* could support determinate laws. *That* would be a basis - indeed the *only* basis - for a possible categorical imperative, ie of a practical law.

There is such a thing! It is a human being! I maintain that man — and in general every rational being — exists as an end in himself and *not merely as a means* to be used by this or that will at its discretion. Whenever he acts in ways directed towards himself or towards other rational beings, a person serves as a *means* to whatever end his action aims at; but he must always be regarded as *also an end*. Things that are preferred have only *conditional* value, for if the preferences (and the needs arising from them) didn't exist, their object would be worthless. That wouldn't count against the 'objects' in question if the desires on which they depend did themselves have unconditional value, but they don't! If the preferences themselves, as the sources of needs, did have absolute value, one would want to have them; but that is so far from the case that every rational being must wish he were altogether free of them. So the value of any objects *to be obtained* through our actions is always conditional. Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature, if they are not rational beings, have only relative value as means, and are therefore called 'things' [*Sachen*]; whereas rational beings are called '*persons*', because their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves (ie as not to be used merely as means) — which makes such a being an object of respect, and something that sets limits to what anyone can choose to do. Such beings are not merely subjective ends whose existence as a result of our action has value *for us*, but are objective ends, ie things [*Dinge*] whose existence is an end in itself. It is indeed an *irreplaceable* end: you can't substitute for it something else to which it would be merely a means. If there were no such ends in themselves, nothing of absolute value could be found, and if all value were conditional and thus contingent, no supreme practical principle for reason could be found anywhere.

So if there is to be a supreme practical principle, and a categorical imperative for the human will, it must be one which, being drawn from the conception of something that must be an end for everyone because it is an end in itself, constitutes an objective principle of the will that can serve as a universal law. The basis for this principle is: *rational nature exists as an end in itself*. Human beings necessarily think of their own existence in this way, which means that the principle holds as a subjective principle of human actions. But every other rational being also thinks of his existence on the same rational ground that holds also for myself;¹¹ and so it is at the same time an *objective* principle — one that doesn't depend on contingent facts about this or that *subject* — a supreme practical ground from which it must be possible to derive all laws of the will. So here is the practical imperative.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Act in such a way as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of anyone else, always as an end and never merely as a means. Let us now see whether this can be carried out.

To return to our previous examples:

First, someone thinking of committing suicide will, if he is guided by the concept of necessary duty to oneself, ask himself

Could my suicide be reconciled with the idea of humanity as *an end in itself*? And his answer to this should be No. If he escapes from his burdensome situation by destroying himself, he is using a person merely as *a means* to keeping himself in a tolerable condition up to the end of his life. But a man is not a *thing* [*Sache*], so he isn't something to be used *merely* as a means, and must always be regarded in all his actions as an end in himself. So I can't dispose of a man by maiming, damaging or killing him — and that includes the case where the man is myself. (This basic principle needs to be refined so as to deal properly with questions such as 'May I have one of my limbs amputated to save my life?' and 'May I expose my life to danger in order to save it?' I shan't go into these matters here; they belong to *morals* and not to the metaphysic of morals.)

[Three times in this next paragraph, and nowhere else in this work, Kant writes of someone's 'containing' the end of an action by someone else. Presumably for B to 'contain' the end of A's action is for B to have A's end as *his* end also, to seek what A seeks.] Second, as concerns necessary.... duties to others, when someone A has it in mind to make someone else B a deceitful promise, he sees immediately that he intends to use B merely as a means, without B's containing in himself the *end* of the action. For B can't possibly assent to A's acting against him in this way, so he can't contain in himself the end of this action. This conflict with the principle about treating others as ends is even easier to see in examples of attacks on people's freedom and property; for in those cases it is obvious that someone who violates the rights of men intends to make use of the person of others merely as means, without considering that as rational beings they should always be valued at the same time as ends, ie as beings who can contain in themselves the end of the very same action.¹²

Thirdly, with regard to contingent (meritorious) duty to oneself [for 'meritorious' see middle paragraph on page 25], it isn't sufficient that the action *not conflict* with humanity in our person as an end in itself; it must also *harmonize* with it. In human nature there are predispositions to greater perfection that are part of nature's purpose for humanity....; to neglect these might perhaps be *consistent* with the preservation of humanity as an end in itself but not with the *furtherance* of that end. [In the original, the italics contrast 'furtherance' not with 'consistent' but with 'preservation'. The present version is based on a conjecture that was a slip.]

Fourthly, with regard to meritorious duty to others: — Humanity might survive even if no-one contributed to the happiness of others, but also no-one intentionally took anything away from the happiness of others; and this is a likely enough state of affairs, because the end or purpose that all men *naturally* have is *their own* happiness. This would put human conduct into harmony with humanity as an end in itself, but only in a *negative* manner. For a *positive* harmony with humanity as an end in itself, what is required is that everyone *positively* tries to further the ends of others as far as he can. For the ends of any person, who is an end in himself, must as far as possible be also *my* ends, if that thought *of him as an end in himself* is to have its *full* effect on me.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

This principle concerning the status of each human being — and more generally of each rational creature — as an end in himself is the supreme limiting condition on the freedom of action of each man. (*Supreme* in the sense that it trumps everything else, eg prudential considerations.) It isn't drawn from experience; there are two reasons why it *can't* be. One reason is the principle's universality: it applies to *absolutely all rational beings*, and experience doesn't stretch out that far. The other is the fact that the principle isn't about humanity considered subjectively, as something that men *do* take to be an end, ie do choose to aim at, but rather about humanity considered as the objective end that *ought to* constitute the supreme limiting condition of all subjective ends, whatever they may be. Experience can inform us about what subjective ends men *do* set before themselves, but not about what non-subjective end *ought to* trump every subjective end. So this principle can't arise from experience, and must arise from pure reason.

¹¹ Here I put this proposition forward as a postulate. The reasons for it will be given in the last chapter.

¹² Don't think that the banal 'Don't do to anyone else what you wouldn't want done to you' could serve here as a guide or principle. It is only a consequence of the real principle, and a restricted and limited consequence at that. It can't as it stands be a universal law, because it doesn't provide a basis for duties to oneself, or benevolent duties to others (for many a man would gladly consent to not receiving benefits from others if that would let him off from showing benevolence to them!), or duties to mete out just punishments to others (for the criminal would argue on this ground against the judge who sentences him). And so on.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit

In this Unit candidates must develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and investigate normative theories and positions in the area of moral philosophy. The specific normative theories and aspects of emotivism to be studied are detailed in the mandatory content. Candidates must study ALL content.

Candidates must be familiar with and use philosophical terms which are relevant. A glossary of terms with which the candidate must be familiar is provided at the end of this Appendix.

Candidates study two specific normative moral theories which illustrate consequentialist and deontological approaches to moral judgements. The Utilitarian ideas of Bentham and Mill are studied to illustrate one possible consequentialist approach. The ideas of Kant are studied to illustrate one possible deontological approach.

Candidates must not simply learn to describe the specific normative theories. They must also learn to critically analyse and evaluate them. Critical analysis must involve identifying the reasoning and assumptions on which the specific theories are based and explaining the implications of these theories when making moral judgements. Critical evaluation must involve explaining the strengths and weaknesses of these theories as well as presenting a reasoned conclusion on their relative merits.

Candidates at Higher level cannot be expected to grasp the relatively complex ideas of Bentham, Mill and Kant through abstract study alone. **For this reason, teachers and lecturers should illustrate the theories, and their implications, strengths and weaknesses, with reference to relevant moral issues.** Specific moral issues are not prescribed. This is a matter for the professional judgement of teachers or lecturers based on the range of candidates studying the Unit and the resources available. However, **care should be taken to ensure that the moral issues selected are relevant to the mandatory content and Evidence Requirements of this Unit.** Candidates must refer to moral issues in response to questions in Unit and Course assessment.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

The aspects of each theory which must be covered are outlined below:

a) Utilitarianism as an example of a consequentialist theory

Consequentialist approaches to ethics

The greatest happiness principle
Calculating potential happiness

Bentham's hedonic calculus
Mill's higher and lower pleasures
Mill's competent judges

Act v Rule Utilitarianism

Assessing each situation individually v following the rules which tend to promote the greatest happiness

Difficulties/weaknesses

The problem of quantifying happiness

The problems with consequences:
predictable or actual?

Short, medium or long-term? Local or global?

The problem with 'happiness': the happiness of sadists?

The problem of justice: sacrificing the minority for the sake of the majority

The potential of imposing unrealistically high moral demands

Alternative approaches

Ideal utilitarianism
Preference-satisfaction Utilitarianism

b) Kant's moral theory as an example of a deontological theory

Deontological approaches to ethics

The sovereignty of reason
The Good Will
Duty v Inclination
The Categorical Imperative

Universalisability
Human beings as ends in themselves, never only as means to an end

Difficulties/weaknesses

The problem of ignoring consequences
The problem of identifying maxims
The problem of competing duties
The problem of ignoring other 'good' motives
The problem of potentially misguided perceptions of duty

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Glossary

Candidates must be familiar with the following terms.

Act Utilitarianism:

A type of Utilitarianism that holds that the moral worth of each action depends upon whether it individually on that occasion produced the greatest happiness.

Aggregate:

A sum total of something amassed out of parts.

Altruism:

An unselfish concern for the welfare of others. Its opposite is selfishness or egoism.

Analyse:

To scrutinise, examine or break something apart into its constituent components.

Categorical Imperative:

An unconditional principle that is binding on everyone. Often contrasted with hypothetical imperatives which are only binding if you want to achieve some particular goal or end.

Competent Judges:

A term used by Mill to describe people best placed to judge between higher and lower pleasures. Competent judges are those who have experienced both sorts of pleasure.

Consequentialism:

The view common to any first-order ethical theory that holds that the consequences of an action are the primary factor in calculating its moral worth.

Contradiction:

Asserting that something both is and is not the case at the same time. Eg. Barak Obama cannot be and not be the President at the same time. He either is, or he is not the President; he cannot be both.

Contradiction in Conception:

In Kant's philosophy this is a contradiction, which some impermissible maxims are guilty of, because they attempt to will a logically impossible state of affairs.

Contradiction in the Will:

In Kant's philosophy this is a contradiction which some impermissible maxims are guilty of because, although they are possible to conceive, they are inconsistent with other maxims which any rational person would wish to assent to at some point.

Deontology/Deontological:

The ethical theory that the moral worth of an action is intrinsic to the act itself rather than its consequences. Kant's **deontological** approach argued that moral obligation lay in doing one's duty.

Duty:

An action that a person is morally or legally obliged to perform.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Duty Ethics:

Another word for deontological theories which focus on duty as the source of moral worth.

Equity/Equity Principle:

The first order-ethical theory that everyone's interests are of equal importance or at least are worthy of equal consideration.

Felicific Calculus:

Another name for the Hedonic Calculus.

Hedonic Calculus:

A method proposed by Jeremy Bentham of calculating how much utility an action produces.

Hedonism/Hedonic Principle:

The first-order ethical theory that whether an action is morally right or wrong depends on whether it promotes the maximum pleasure.

Higher Pleasures:

A term used by Mill to describe intellectual pleasures such as literature, art or music, as opposed to the 'lower' physical pleasures.

Hypothetical Imperative:

A conditional principle that is only binding if you want to achieve some particular goal or end. Contrasted by Kant with categorical imperatives which are unconditionally binding.

Ideal Utilitarianism:

A form of utilitarianism that holds that happiness is not the only intrinsic good but that things such as beauty and knowledge also have intrinsic value.

Imperfect Duty:

A duty that allows exceptions.

Inclination:

A tendency, disposition or desire to behave in a particular way or to choose one course of action over another. Kant contrasts inclination with duty as a motive for action.

Intentions:

What an agent wishes to achieve by an action.

Intrinsic:

Relating to the inherent nature of a thing, eg. skydiving is an intrinsically dangerous activity.

Intuition:

Knowledge of something without using any rational or empirical processes; immediately perceiving that something is true.

Justice:

Concerned with fairness and equality, particularly in the distribution of goods or punishments.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Kantianism:

The moral views (and other views) of the Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant.

Kingdom of ends:

An imaginary state where the laws protect individual autonomy.

Laws of nature:

Recognized patterns in the behaviour of phenomena in the natural world such as Newton's laws of motion.

Lower Pleasures:

A term used by Mill to describe non-intellectual pleasures such as food, drink and sex.

Maxims:

Underlying principles of action or rules of conduct such as 'Don't steal'.

Meta-ethics:

The study of the underlying concepts and language of morality rather than the practical issues of what ought and ought not to be done.

Moral Dilemmas:

An ethical problem which involves choosing between competing courses of action which may appear to be both morally praiseworthy or both morally blameworthy.

Moral Law:

The law of duty as regards what is right and wrong. Kant claims we can identify the moral law by using reason while other philosophers have argued that we require God's guidance to help us identify the Moral Law.

Moral Philosophy:

The branch of philosophy that studies the concepts of right and wrong. It can be subdivided in Normative Ethics and Meta-ethics.

Motive:

The reason for doing something.

Normative Ethics:

The study of moral issues and the first order theories that attempt to resolve moral dilemmas. Concerned with answering the question of what it is that makes an action right or wrong.

Preference Utilitarianism:

A non-hedonistic form of Utilitarianism, advocated by Peter Singer among others, which states that the goal of our actions should be the satisfaction of preferences or desires rather than simply happiness or pleasure.

Perfect Duty:

A duty that does not allow exceptions.

Prudent:

Careful or sensible. Often contrasted in philosophical contexts with 'moral' or 'altruistic'. So paying our taxes would not count as moral, no matter if the poor benefit, because my reason is self-interested or prudential.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Qualitative:

Concerned with evaluating the non-measurable features of an object. A qualitative measure of a cake might be how tasty it is as opposed to a quantitative measure such as how heavy it is.

Quantitative:

Concerned with quantities or amounts of things. A quantitative measure of a cake might be how heavy it is as opposed to a qualitative measure such as how tasty it is.

Quantify:

To measure.

Rule Utilitarianism:

A type of Utilitarianism that holds that the moral worth of each action depends upon whether it accords with rules which in turn are justified by their tendency to promote the greatest happiness.

Special Obligations:

Moral obligations that one may have towards specific individuals by virtue of one's relationship with them, eg. to your parents or children.

Supererogatory Actions:

Actions which go beyond our ordinary duties as moral agents such as giving up your life to save another, which though morally commendable is not generally regarded as obligatory.

Teleological:

Explaining things in terms of their goal or ends. Sometimes used as a synonym for consequentialist.

Universalise/Universalisability:

The ability of moral judgements to be applied equally to all in similar situations.

Utilitarianism:

The first-order moral theory that an action is right if it maximises aggregate happiness.