Philosophy
Assignment
General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the assignment Component of Higher Philosophy Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task(s) for this component of Course assessment, which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

This edition: September 2015 (version 2.0)

Introduction

This is the general assessment information for the Higher Philosophy assignment.

This assignment is worth 30 marks out of a total of 90 marks. This is 33% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A–D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the assignment Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 33% of the total marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the assignment in the *Course Assessment Specification*.

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for this Component of the added value of this Course by means of an assignment.

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate challenge and application by requiring the candidate to draw on and apply higher order cognitive skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a philosophical question. The question may be related to areas the candidate has studied within the rest of the Course if they wish, but they are free to research any philosophical question.

Assessment overview

Candidates are required to write a philosophical response to a claim, a question or some other kind of prompt which has been agreed with their teacher/lecturer.

Candidates should think carefully about the prompt and investigate any philosophical issues that it raises. The teacher/lecturer will give guidance on how to go about this investigation. Candidates should not assume that there is a single correct response and that they are looking for the 'right' answer. There may be many different ways of responding.

It is important that their response is a philosophical response. In particular their response should aim to:

♦ present a sustained and focused argument
♦ present a clear and well supported conclusion
♦ show a critical appreciation of how the topic relates to wider philosophical themes
♦ demonstrate knowledge and understanding that is relevant, accurate and detailed
♦ identify and concentrate on the most relevant aspects of the topic
♦ critically interact with primary sources written by recognised philosophers
♦ respond effectively to alternative positions and counter arguments
♦ precisely distinguish between different interpretations of terms and concepts

- be written clearly and concisely and, where appropriate, use technical vocabulary both accurately and effectively
- if appropriate, deploy apposite examples and analogies to further their argument

The report should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words, excluding references, footnotes and appendices.

The candidate must provide the word count for the completed report, excluding appendices, footnotes and references.

If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty will be applied.

It is also important that candidates include a bibliography detailing the sources they have used when developing their response and that they include footnotes giving details of any quotations that have been included.

Most importantly, it should be the candidate's own work. They should never quote or simply paraphrase somebody else's work and pass it off as their own. If they are using somebody else's work then it must be properly credited in a footnote.

Assessment conditions

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access whilst completing the assignment but candidates should ensure that they include a bibliography detailing those resources and that they have properly referenced those sources when they have been used.

Any direct quotations from source material must be clearly acknowledged by the use of quotation marks. Specific details of sources must be given — eg dates and writers of articles, specific web pages, titles and dates of publication of books; it is not acceptable to say, for example, 'various newspaper articles' or 'environmental websites' or 'the internet'. Unacknowledged use of other people's material, for example by copying and pasting from the internet or any other source, or re-wording or summarising information from another source without acknowledgement, is plagiarism and carries severe penalties.

Candidates must undertake the assignment independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the production of evidence taking place.

In this assignment, reasonable assistance may include:

- directing candidates to the instructions for candidates
- clarifying instructions/requirements of the task
- advising candidates on how to undertake research
- explaining the different status of different types of resource
- advising candidates on possible sources of information

♦ interim progress checks

It is legitimate to assist the candidate with appropriate resources but they must not be supplied with a single resource which provides them with the answer or given detailed directions on how to use specific areas of content of those resources. Assessors are encouraged to give advice on the method and processes of undertaking the assignment but should not be giving detailed feedback on the specific content of the candidate's work.

The assignment will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring it is the candidate's own work.

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

♦ Candidate assignment evidence produced under some supervision and control

General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following general marking instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for Course assessment.

The assessment task will be set and externally marked by SQA and conducted in centres under the conditions specified by SQA.

General Marking Principles for the assignment
This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to this assignment. These principles must be read in conjunction with the Detailed Marking Instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

(a)   Marks for each candidate response must <u>always</u> be assigned in line with these General Marking Principles and the Detailed Marking Instructions for this assessment.
(b)   Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.

Candidates can structure their assignment and demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways.

The assignment will be marked holistically according to the criteria given in the Detailed Marking Instructions.

In presenting their findings, candidates will show the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

Knowledge: Material that is relevant to explaining or understanding the question. Not all related information will be relevant. For example, it is unlikely that biographical information will be relevant.

Analysis: This is the breakdown of something into its constituent parts and detection of the relationships of those parts and the way they are organised. This might, for example, involve identifying the component parts of an argument and showing how they are related, explaining how an argument develops or identifying key features of a philosophical position.

Evaluation: This occurs when a judgement is made on the basis of certain criteria. The judgement may be based on internal criteria such as consistency and logical accuracy or on external criteria such as whether a philosophical position accords with widely held moral intuitions.

Reasoned view: This is the ability to develop and sustain an argument that leads to and supports a clear conclusion.

Administrative information

Published: September 2015 (version 2.0)

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	Requirements clarified to ensure the development of an argument. Word Count amended in line with other Higher Courses. Marking Instructions amended to reflect holistic approach.	Qualifications Manager	September 2015

Security and confidentiality

This document can be used by practitioners in SQA-approved centres for the assessment of National Courses and not for any other purpose.

Copyright

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for assessment purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. If it needs to be reproduced for any purpose other than assessment, it is the centre's responsibility to obtain copyright clearance.

Re-use for alternative purposes without the necessary copyright clearance may constitute copyright infringement.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2015