



National
Qualifications
2025

2025 Philosophy

Paper 2

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2025

These marking instructions have been prepared by examination teams for use by SQA appointed markers when marking external course assessments.

The information in this document may be reproduced in support of SQA qualifications only on a non-commercial basis. If it is reproduced, SQA must be clearly acknowledged as the source. If it is to be reproduced for any other purpose, written permission must be obtained from permissions@sqa.org.uk.



General marking principles for Higher Philosophy

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the specific marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or specific marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) We use the term 'or any other acceptable answer' to allow for any possible variation in candidate responses. Award marks according to the accuracy and relevance of candidate responses. Candidates may gain marks where the answer is accurate but expressed in their own words.
- (d) Where candidates give points of knowledge without specifying the context, reward these unless it is clear that they do not refer to the context of the question.

In giving their responses, candidates should demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding.

- **Knowledge:** award **1 mark** for each relevant, developed point of knowledge and understanding which is used to respond to 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.

Marking instructions for each question

Section 1 – ARGUMENTS IN ACTION

Question		General Marking Instructions for this type of question	Max Mark	Specific Marking Instructions for this question
1.	(a)	<p><i>Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:</i></p> <p><i>‘This beautiful and wonderful world couldn’t just come about by chance. Consider it for yourself! Surely the beauty and wonder of our planet suggests a creator God. God must exist.’</i></p> <p><i>Identify a statement from the passage.</i></p>	1	<p>Candidates should be awarded 1 mark for any of the following sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this beautiful and wonderful world couldn’t just come about by chance • surely the beauty and wonder of our planet suggests a creator God • God must exist.
	(b)	<p><i>Give a definition of an argument.</i></p>	1	<p>Any appropriate response should be credited. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an argument is a set of statements that attempt to establish a claim.
	(c)	<p><i>Is there an argument in the passage?</i></p> <p><i>Give a reason for your answer.</i></p>	1	<p>1 mark should be awarded for noting that the passage does contain an argument alongside an appropriate reason for example, because it provides reasons to support the claim that God exists.</p>
2.	(a)	<p><i>Read the following argument and answer the questions that follows:</i></p> <p><i>P1. All birds can fly</i> <i>P2. A penguin is a bird</i> <i>C. Penguins can fly.</i></p> <p><i>Are both of the premises in this argument acceptable? Give reasons for your answer.</i></p>	2	<p>Candidates should be awarded 1 mark for any of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the first premise is false, so it is not acceptable • the second premise is common knowledge, so it is acceptable • a premise is deemed acceptable if it would be reasonable to take it to be true.

Question		General Marking Instructions for this type of question	Max Mark	Specific Marking Instructions for this question
	(b)	<p><i>If the premises of this deductive argument were true, would they be sufficient to draw the conclusion?</i></p> <p><i>Explain your answer.</i></p>	1	Yes. This is a valid deductive argument.
	(c)	<p><i>What kind of argument diagram would best represent this argument?</i></p>	1	1 mark for either naming it as a linked diagram, or for drawing a linked argument diagram.
3.	(a)	<p><i>Read the following argument and answer the questions that follow:</i></p> <p><i>‘Children need to go to school for their overall development. The idea is straightforward – schools provide opportunities to acquire not only academic knowledge but also social skills. Children also learn teamwork and problem-solving there, which are important for success in adulthood.</i></p> <p><i>Put this argument into standard form.</i></p>	3	<p>P1 Schools provide opportunities to acquire academic knowledge and social skills. P2 Children learn teamwork and problem-solving at school, which are important for success in adulthood.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Conc. Children need to go to school for their overall development.</p> <p>1 mark for the 1st premise if they have left out ‘the idea is straightforward’. 1 mark for the 2nd premise if they have replaced ‘there’ with ‘at school’. (it is acceptable for candidates to break this premise into 2 separate premises) 1 mark for the conclusion.</p>
	(b)	<p><i>What is the definition of a valid argument?</i></p>	1	An argument in which the conclusion cannot be false if the premises are true.
	(c)	<p><i>Explain why the above argument is not valid. You must refer to the argument in your answer.</i></p>	1	<p>Candidates should be awarded 1 mark for any of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school is not the only place that children can learn teamwork, problem-solving and social skills • it is not certain from the argument that teamwork, problem solving, academic knowledge and social skills are required for a child’s overall development just for success in adulthood which may be a different thing. <p>Candidates should not be awarded a mark for stating that the argument does not establish that these skills are the only things required for a child’s overall development as this would not affect the validity of the argument.</p>

Question		General Marking Instructions for this type of question	Max Mark	Specific Marking Instructions for this question
4.	(a)	<p><i>Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:</i></p> <p><i>'You notice that every time you feed your cat, they start purring and rubbing against your leg. Based on these observations, you conclude that the next time you feed your cat they will begin purring and rubbing against your leg.'</i></p> <p><i>Explain why this is an example of inductive reasoning.</i></p>	1	<p>Candidates should be awarded 1 mark for either of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the conclusion is not established for certain but is probable based on the evidence it draws from evidence of what has happened before and assumes that the future will resemble the past even if we take the premises to be true the conclusion is at best probable.
	(b)	<p><i>What would determine the inductive strength of this argument? Explain your answer.</i></p>	2	<p>Candidates should be awarded 1 mark each for any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of times you've fed your cat if you'd only fed it a couple of times it would not be very strong if you'd fed it twice a day for five years, that would make it a much stronger argument.
5.		<p><i>Give a definition of confirmation bias.</i></p>	2	<p>Candidates should be awarded 1 mark for each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirmation bias is when you only look for evidence that backs up the point you believe to be true confirmation bias is when you ignore all evidence that opposes the point you believe to be true.

Question		General Marking Instructions for this type of question	Max Mark	Specific Marking Instructions for this question
6.	(a)	<p><i>Read the following argument and answer the questions that follow:</i></p> <p><i>‘My priest said that animals are placed on Earth for our use and benefit. She says that it is our God-given right to use them for food, clothing and other necessities. Therefore, it’s fine to eat steaks and wear leather.’</i></p> <p><i>Define a fallacious appeal to authority.</i></p>	1	<p>A fallacious appeal to authority is used in an argument when a conclusion is drawn on the basis of it being made by someone who is taken to be an authority but is not in fact an authority on the matter in question. (1 mark)</p> <p>No marks to be given if the candidate simply refers to a claim that is made by an inappropriate authority.</p>
	(b)	<p><i>State one of the criteria required for an appeal to authority to be considered appropriate.</i></p>	1	<p>Candidates should be awarded 1 mark for any of the following:</p> <p>An appropriate appeal to authority would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be making a claim within their area of expertise • have sufficient expertise in a relevant subject • be making a claim on which there is an adequate degree of agreement with other experts • be free of significant bias • be making a claim within a legitimate discipline • have a reputation of being reliable • not have a vested interest in you believing a particular claim.
	(c)	<p><i>Discuss whether the appeal to authority in the argument is appropriate. Give reasons for your answer.</i></p> <p>Candidates may approach this question in different ways. They may make 2 simple points in relation to whether it is an appropriate appeal to authority in the argument, or they may make one developed point.</p>	2	<p>Some points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the priest is an appropriate authority because she is authoritative on religious morals • the priest is not an appropriate authority because lots of experts on morality (eg moral philosophers) disagree with the idea that it is fine to eat steak and wear leather • whether or not the priest meets these requirements, there may still be some dispute over whether we have a ‘God-given right’ to anything (1 mark), and the priest’s authority will be of no help in resolving this (1 mark) • if you don’t believe God exists then the appeal to the priest’s authority will not convince you that it’s ok to eat steaks etc (1 mark), whereas if you are a member of the priest’s congregation you may be more inclined to accept their word. (1 mark)

Question		General Marking Instructions for this type of question	Max Mark	Specific Marking Instructions for this question
7	(a)	<p><i>Read the following argument, which some people may think contains a fallacious appeal to emotion:</i></p> <p><i>'I'm really stressed. I have so much going on this week. There's the school show on Thursday and Friday and at the weekend I'm working. On top of all that, I've just broken up with my girlfriend and I'm really upset. The deadline for my assignment is on Monday. Put yourself in my shoes and think how you'd feel. I shouldn't need to hand in my assignment on Monday.'</i></p> <p><i>Describe the appeal to emotion fallacy.</i></p>	1	<p>A fallacious appeal to emotion is made when the conclusion of an argument is reached on the basis of an emotion, rather than an appraisal of the facts, and the emotion is irrelevant to the argument's conclusion. (1 mark)</p>
	(b)	<p><i>Explain whether you think the argument above contains a fallacious appeal to emotion.</i></p> <p>Candidates may argue this point either way.</p>	1	<p>The stress this student is under is obviously going to prevent them from doing their best work on the assignment, and that is relevant to the conclusion that they shouldn't need to hand it in on Monday, so it is not a fallacious appeal. (1 mark)</p> <p>Even though the teacher may feel bad for this student that they're under so much stress, that has absolutely nothing to do with when the deadline for the assignment is. The deadline is the deadline, and the appeal to emotion is fallacious. (1 mark)</p>
8	(a)	<p><i>Read the following argument, which some people may think contains a fallacy:</i></p> <p><i>'You wake up one morning with a sore throat after having ice cream the night before. You conclude that eating ice cream caused your sore throat.'</i></p> <p><i>Name the fallacy.</i></p>	1	<p>Post hoc ergo propter hoc. (1 mark)</p>

Question		General Marking Instructions for this type of question	Max Mark	Specific Marking Instructions for this question
	(b)	<i>Describe this fallacy.</i>	1	This fallacy assumes that because one event occurred before another, the first event was the cause of the second. (1 mark)
	(c)	<i>Explain whether you think the argument above contains this fallacy, giving reasons for your answer.</i>	2	The chances are that you have eaten ice cream plenty of times when it has not given you a sore throat (1 mark) . It is more likely that it is something else that has caused the sore throat, eg illness. (1 mark) If a candidate were to argue that the ice cream could have caused the sore throat they could only be awarded marks if they were to give a compelling explanation as to why the ice cream was likely to be this cause, for example if they were to suggest the person eating the ice cream was allergic to dairy then it would be reasonable to take the ice cream as the cause of their sore throat.
9.	(a)	<i>What is the distinction between a formal and informal fallacy?</i>	2	In a formal fallacy the error lies in the structure of the argument (1 mark) . In an informal fallacy there is a problem with the content of the argument (1 mark) .
	(b)	<i>Give an example of an argument that commits the denying the antecedent fallacy.</i>	1	Any argument of the form If P then Q, not P, so not Q. (1 mark)

Section 2 – KNOWLEDGE AND DOUBT

DESCARTES

Question		General Marking Instructions for this type of question		Specific Marking Instructions for this question
10.		<p><i>Define what Descartes means by clear perceptions.</i></p> <p>Any answer that shows an understanding of this term as used by Descartes should be credited.</p>	1	<p>A perception is ‘clear’ when it is present and accessible to the attentive mind. (1 mark)</p>
11.		<p><i>Define what Descartes means by distinct perceptions.</i></p> <p>Any answer that shows an understanding of this term as used by Descartes should be credited.</p>	1	<p>A perception is ‘distinct’ if, as well as being clear, it is separated from all other perceptions and contains only what is clear. (1 mark)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>a perception is distinct if it is not mixed up with anything that is not clear. (1 mark)</p>
12.		<p><i>State the clear and distinct rule.</i></p>	1	<p>Descartes’ claim that ‘whatever I perceive very clearly and distinctly is true’ (1 mark)</p>
13.		<p><i>Why does Descartes think he needs the idea of God to support the clear and distinct rule?</i></p>	1	<p>Descartes thinks he needs to prove that there is a God for him to trust fully in his clear and distinct perceptions. Otherwise, when he is not concentrating fully on them he must doubt them based on the possibility of the evil demon. (1 mark)</p> <p><i>‘I must examine whether there is a God, and, if there is, whether he can be a deceiver. For if I do not know this, it seems that I can never be quite certain about anything else.’ (1 mark) or a paraphrasing of this quote.</i></p>

Question	General Marking Instructions for this type of question		Specific Marking Instructions for this question
14.	<p><i>Evaluate Descartes' use of the clear and distinct rule.</i></p> <p>Award 1 mark for an appropriate point and an additional mark for a development of that point.</p> <p>A superficial explanation of a criticism may only be awarded 1 mark.</p> <p>No marks for just stating the Cartesian circle.</p>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how do we know Descartes is not mistaken about the claim that '<i>whatever I perceive very clearly and distinctly is true</i>'? (1 mark) He previously mistook the things he experienced from his senses to be real based on believing they were clear and distinct (1 mark) • some things that Descartes doubts in Meditation 1, for example truths of geometry, are later claimed to be clear and distinct. (1 mark) How was it possible for these to be doubted if they are meant to be certain? (1 mark) • Descartes claims often that man is 'subject to error'. (1 mark) Therefore, could we be mistaken about having clear and distinct perceptions? (1 mark) • Descartes' explanation of what he means by clear and distinct perceptions is vague (1 mark) • what is clear and distinct to Descartes may not be clear and distinct to someone else (1 mark) • the Cartesian Circle – In order to help guarantee that we can have knowledge based on the clear and distinct rule Descartes brings in his proof for God. (1 mark) His argument for God relies on clear and distinct perceptions. This is circular reasoning (1 mark) • Descartes accepts the clear and distinct rule because he is certain of the cogito. (1 mark) However, there are reasons to doubt the certainty of the cogito, for example the fact that the evil demon could be making him think it is certain. (1 mark)

Section 3 – MORAL PHILOSOPHY

UTILITARIANISM

Question		General Marking Instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific Marking Instructions for this question
15.		<i>Explain how the hedonic calculus is used to calculate pleasure and make moral decisions.</i>	4	<p>Candidates should be awarded 1 mark for any of the following points:</p> <p>Each factor of the hedonic calculus is given a value for the first proposed action. (1 mark)</p> <p>Calculation is made to find out how much pleasure and/or pain will result from this action. (1 mark)</p> <p>Pleasures and pains should be calculated for each person affected by the action. (1 mark)</p> <p>The same process is gone through with respect to a second action and any other possible actions. (1 mark)</p> <p>The action that will generate the greatest aggregate of pleasure/pain is the right action. (1 mark)</p> <p>Reference to Bentham’s quote: <i>‘It is not to be expected that this process should be strictly pursued previously to every moral judgement.’</i> (1 mark)</p>

Question	General Marking Instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific Marking Instructions for this question
16.	<p><i>Evaluate the use of the hedonic calculus in making moral decisions.</i></p> <p>Award 1 mark for an appropriate point and an additional mark for a development of that point.</p> <p>A superficial explanation of a criticism may only be awarded 1 mark.</p>	6	<p>Appropriate evaluation might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • going through the hedonic calculus is time-consuming, which makes it impractical for everyday moral decision-making (1 mark) • assigning values to each of the factors in the hedonic calculus feels quite arbitrary, and this may result in a lack of confidence that the right moral decision has been reached (1 mark) • there are many different consequences to be taken into account, and it is not clear how they should be weighted. (1 mark) The global consequences of an action might cause a lot of pain and its local consequences a moderate amount of pleasure. (1 mark) Cheap fashion stores are a good example of this, where garment workers' rights are ignored for the sake of bargains on the high street for western consumers (1 mark) • sometimes we expect the long-term consequences of an action to be very bad, but because they are not certain, short-term consequences with a higher degree of certainty are prioritised. (1 mark) Global warming has been a good example of this, as people argued for years over whether climate change was really caused by humans and failed to take action to limit it because such action would have been inconvenient and expensive. (1 mark)

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]