# Higher Philosophy

## Subject-specific guidance on gathering key evidence in session 2020–21

Please read this guidance alongside National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates and the SQA Academy resource, Quality assurance of estimates for National Courses.

## Gathering key evidence for Higher Philosophy

This document and *National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates* will give you additional support and guidance to support your decision making for session 2020–21. Evidence should be gathered later in the course, as a realistic reflection of a candidate's attainment. It is important to note that it is not the **quantity** of evidence, but the **quality** of evidence, in relation to its predictive value, that will support you during this process.

The following types of key evidence are likely to provide a good predictive value and may be helpful to you, although there may be other types of key evidence you would like to use.

### Types of key evidence

For Higher Philosophy in session 2020–21, key evidence needs to come from the question paper components: question paper 1 and question paper 2.

The most robust evidence for the question paper components, in terms of providing breadth, depth and level of challenge, is that which has been generated using an assessment task that replicates, as far as possible, the SQA question papers. The evidence does not need to be generated on a single occasion if this is not practical under restrictions current at the time of the assessment. It should, however, be generated under supervision and control, where possible.

Assessments of this nature, used towards the end of the academic session and which cover the full course, would be considered as sufficient pieces of key evidence on which to base a provisional result, although you may wish to supplement this with other evidence.

Other types of evidence relating to the question papers may include combining a number of shorter assessments that have appropriate timings, and that are completed under a high degree of supervision and control. For example, a shorter assessment completed earlier in the academic session that replicates sections of the question papers or class tests that cover knowledge and understanding content from one area once it has been taught. Shorter assessments are likely to be less demanding and have less predictive value than an assessment that more closely matches a complete SQA question paper and this should be taken into account when using shorter assessments for provisional results.

## Component 1: question paper 1

The question paper gives learners an opportunity to draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the course,

While it is recommended that centres aim to deliver the course as normal, it is recognised that many are likely to experience some disruption to learning and teaching during the 2020–21 session which may make this more challenging. Teachers and lecturers are free to decide the timing and depth of delivery of the course content. However, when gathering candidate evidence for provisional results, it is important that this replicates the question paper by sampling content from these two sections of the course:

♦ Section 1 — Knowledge and Doubt
♦ Section 2 — Moral Philosophy

In line with the proposed modifications, sampling **either** Descartes **or** Hume in the question paper will be accepted in the 2020–21 session. However, as noted above, it is recommended that the full course content is delivered so candidates experience the subject as richly as possible.

The Higher Philosophy Course Specification outlines in more detail the skills, knowledge and understanding associated with the question paper.

### Assessment advice

Challenge within the knowledge and understanding element of the question paper is embedded in the types and range of questions across the paper and the marks available for each. Across the whole question paper there should be a mixture of A-type and C-type questions. Approximately 50% of questions should be accessible to C-grade candidates and 30% should be accessible to A-grade candidates. SQA's Understanding Standards website has exemplar materials that demonstrate the standard expected for Higher Philosophy.

Question paper 1 is worth a total of 60 marks. Section 1 of this question paper is 30 marks. Candidates produce an essay on **either** Descartes **or** Hume. Section 2 is 30 marks. Candidates produce an essay in which they apply a moral theory to a given situation or respond to a quotation. The essays are marked holistically and given a mark out of 30.

It is important that the evidence accurately reflects the mandatory content, as detailed in pages 3 to 11 of the Higher Philosophy Course Specification. All questions should be based on this content.

## Component 2: question paper 2

The question paper gives learners an opportunity to draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the course. Question paper 2 samples content from across the three sections of the course:

♦ Section 1 — Arguments in Action
♦ Section 2 — Knowledge and Doubt
♦ Section 3 — Moral Philosophy

The Higher Philosophy Course Specification outlines in more detail the skills, knowledge and understanding associated with the question paper.

**Assessment advice**

Challenge within the knowledge and understanding element of the question paper is embedded in the types and range of questions across the paper and the marks available for each. Across the whole question paper there should be a mixture of A-type and C-type questions. Approximately 50% of questions should be accessible to C-grade candidates and 30% should be accessible to A-grade candidates. SQA's Understanding Standards website has exemplar materials that demonstrate the standard expected for Higher Philosophy.

Question paper 2 is worth a total of 50 marks. Section 1 of this question paper is 30 marks. Section 2 and section 3 are worth 10 marks each. Each section has a mark range of 1–6 marks. Candidates gain 1 mark for each relevant substantive point up to the total number of marks available for that question. The number of marks available is an indication of how much candidates should write in their responses.

It is important that the evidence accurately reflects the mandatory content, as detailed in pages 3 to 11 of the Higher Philosophy Course Specification. All questions should be based on this content.

**Using additional assessment resources for session 2020–21: key information**

It is important that you use valid and reliable assessment when gathering evidence in session 2020–21.

In Higher Philosophy, SQA will provide question papers for session 2020–21. Please note that the marking instructions have not been standardised based on candidate responses. You may therefore need to agree within your centre how to consistently mark an item if a candidate response is not covered by the marking instructions.

The Higher Philosophy question papers will only be available on SQA's secure website — you must treat these confidentially, in the same way as other live assessment materials.

You have the option to use the question papers as internal assessments for gathering candidate evidence. Question papers can be split to support assessments you carry out during class time.

There is flexibility in how you may use these resources, such as:

♦ two full assessments conducted under a high degree of supervision and control
♦ a series of shorter assessments conducted under a high degree of supervision and control and with appropriate timings for you to deconstruct and use as appropriate. For example, where you have not been able to cover a content area which is assessed, you may wish to replace that question with one which is more appropriate and of comparable demand

If you use a question paper in part or in its entirety, you should remind candidates that they must not discuss the content of the paper with anyone, including friends, family or on social media.

Please note, the 2020 paper is being provided as an assessment resource and is not mandatory.

## Understanding the national standard

Examples of candidate responses from the 2019 Higher question paper, along with associated commentaries, are available on SQA's Understanding Standards website.

The question papers and past paper marking instructions detail how marks are allocated for each question type also provide sample responses which exemplify the allocation of marks.

You may also fine the annual course reports useful. These are published on the Higher Philosophy subject page.

## Summary

You should base your provisional results for Higher Philosophy on a holistic review of a candidate's performance based on demonstrated attainment of the following:

♦ knowledge and understanding from across the course content
♦ responses to the different question types