



NQ Philosophy name Qualification

Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Philosophy
Verification activity:	Postal
Round:	1
Date published:	June 2025

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
J25E 76	SCQF level 6	Philosophy: Arguments in Action
J25V 76	SCQF level 6	Philosophy: Moral Philosophy
J25F 75	SCQF level 5	Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt
J25D 75	SCQF level 5	Philosophy: Arguments in Action
J25T 75	SCQF level 5	Philosophy: Moral Philosophy

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres' approaches to assessment were valid and in line with SQA requirements. Information on assessment judgements was clearly laid out and outcomes achieved recorded effectively.

Centres continue to use a variety of assessment approaches. Most centres used questions directly from the unit assessment support (UAS) packs that are available on the SQA secure site, while others adapted these effectively through creating valid questions by making minor changes to the content of published materials. Some centres created their own valid approaches—for example, using centre-devised assessment booklets that allowed candidates to complete the minimum standard required, but that also allowed for depth of learning with additional questions. Centres were careful to highlight the questions that related to the required outcomes.

If centres are making significant adaptations in the assessments from the UAS packs or creating their own assessments, it is advised that centres use SQA's free [prior verification service](#). This gives the centre confidence that their assessment is fit for purpose and meets national standards.

There were good examples of assessors providing helpful feedback to candidates that allowed them to add clarification or more detail in their answer to ensure the minimum standard was met. It is acceptable for candidates to clarify their understanding verbally to their assessor. Best practice was evident when assessors noted that a conversation had taken place and included a short note that described the content of the candidate's further comments.

Assessment judgements

Centres' assessment judgements were in line with national standards, reliable, and accepted for most candidates. In a very small number of cases, there was evidence of

centres being too harsh with their judgements. There were, however, some examples of centres not making accurate judgements in relation to the minimum standard. This was caused by either inaccurate definitions being credited as meeting the minimum standard or candidate answers not directly relating to the requirement of the question.

Centres should consider the following comments to encourage candidates to provide consistently robust evidence, and to ensure that assessor judgements reflect the minimum standard.

Arguments in Action (SCQF level 6)

Assessment standard 1.2: Most candidates were able to explain the difference between inductive and deductive arguments. However, there was some evidence of centres accepting inaccurate definitions. Centres could refer to the glossary of terms in Appendix 3 of the Higher Course Specification September 2022 (version 3.1) for the accepted definition of inductive and deductive arguments.

Assessment standard 2.3: Candidates often failed to reference the terms ‘acceptability’, ‘relevance’ or ‘sufficiency’ when expressing their judgements. Centres should ensure that these terms are used to help candidates evaluate effectively and subsequently meet the minimum standard.

Moral Philosophy (SCQF level 6)

Assessment standards 1.1 and 1.2: Candidates continue to provide detailed responses to 1.1 (often with more detail than necessary). Candidates also completed assessment standard 1.2 consistently well, although at times they struggled to express their application concisely.

Assessment standard 2.1: Most candidates expressed well thought-out evaluative responses. On a small number of occasions, centres were harsh in their judgements that the minimum standard hadn’t been met. Centres were correct in their judgements that simply stating a strength or weakness is not enough to meet the minimum standard; however, even if there is some inaccuracy in a candidate’s response, assessors should consider the answer as meeting the minimum standard if the candidate’s response has

evidence that they have used at least one strength and/or weakness to accurately justify their conclusion.

Knowledge and Doubt (SCQF level 5)

Assessment standard 1.1: Most candidates were able to describe accurately the tripartite theory as a classic definition of knowledge. However, some candidates attempted to define knowledge by explaining a particular philosopher's method for attaining knowledge, rather than presenting a straightforward statement about what knowledge is.

Assessment standard 2.1: Almost all candidates were able to describe a strength or weakness of either rationalism or empiricism. However, there was some evidence of candidates confusing instincts with innate ideas. When this happens, assessors should be careful not to accept instinct as a potential criticism of empiricism.

Section 3: general comments

Centres should use the National 5 and Higher course specifications as guides to the delivery of content within the units, as this ensures candidates are taught accepted definitions. Although these are not mandatory documents for the freestanding units, there is a wealth of useful guidance in them, particularly in the glossaries.

Some centres provided evidence that contained significantly more candidate detail or learning and teaching materials than the minimum standard required for passing a unit. It is acceptable to provide evidence in this way, and this might be considered good practice in relation to the learning and teaching experience. However, for verification purposes, it is important that assessors record clearly on candidate scripts and/or in accompanying assessor cover notes where they deemed the minimum standard was met. This makes the verification process (both internal and external) more efficient and accurate.

All centres provided evidence of their internal verification processes, including evidence of cross-marking for internal verification purposes. Best practice was evident when

centres provided a school or department verification policy that was accompanied by candidate responses that evidenced cross-marking of assessments and robust recording of processes. However, it should be noted that even with evidence of internal verification having taken place, some centres' judgements were not accepted. Centres should ensure that both the assessor and the verifier carefully review the requirements of achieving the minimum standard by reviewing the unit support packs on the secure site. Good practice of robust internal verification procedures should include recording or minuting that this review has taken place prior to marking and cross-marking activities.