



NQ verification 2023–24 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Philosophy
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	July 2024

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
J25N 76	SCQF level 6	Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt
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

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

Centres used a variety of assessment approaches. These included using questions directly from the unit assessment support packs that are available on SQA's secure website. Some centres adapted these effectively while others created their own assessment approaches. There were some examples of creative and valid approaches where candidates completed booklets that contained a variety of questions and tasks. Some of these included tasks and activities that encouraged depth of learning beyond the minimum requirement. Most also identified clearly where the outcomes could be met, which allowed for straightforward verification of the instruments of assessment.

All assessments that included minor changes from the unit assessment support packs allowed the candidates the opportunity to reach the specified standard. However, there was evidence of centre-devised approaches that made it difficult for candidates to pass the outcomes. Centres that make significant adaptations in the assessments from the unit assessment support packs or create their own assessments should 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.

Centres should consider the following comments to ensure candidates are encouraged to provide consistently robust evidence, and 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 using definitions that can be misleading. 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 standards 2.2 and 2.3: Some candidates did more in 2.2 than was necessary and drifted into answering 2.3. Centres should teach the candidates the skill of simply explaining the fallacy in 2.2. In 2.3, centres should encourage candidates to focus on the skill of evaluation by explaining why the specific argument is unsuccessful. To do this, candidates should refer directly to the terms acceptability, relevance and/or sufficiency when expressing their judgements.

Moral Philosophy (SCQF level 6)

Assessment standards 1.1 and 1.2: Candidates were able to provide detailed responses to 1.1 (often providing more detail than necessary). However, they found 1.2 (applying the theory) much more challenging. Candidates found it difficult to show their understanding of how a key aspect of a theory should be applied in a particular context. This was more of an issue with those applying Kantian ethics than those applying Utilitarianism.

Assessment standard 2.1: Candidates sometimes struggled to express their reasoned opinions clearly. Some candidates simply listed strengths and weaknesses, and did not directly express their personal reasoned conclusion. Some candidates met the minimum

standard by including implied statements of their personal conclusion. Assessors should encourage candidates to make their evaluative conclusion more explicit.

Arguments in Action (SCQF level 5)

Assessment standard 2.2: Most candidates were able to identify accurately whether an argument was valid or not, although some found it more challenging to explain why.

Moral Philosophy (SCQF level 5)

Assessment standards 1.1 and 1.2: Almost all candidates were able to explain the main features of a moral theory. However, application of the theory to a scenario was more challenging. Some candidates made general comments about the theory or simply stated a personal view rather than showing the ability to apply the theory directly.

Assessment standards 2.1 and 2.2: Most candidates were able to identify strengths and weakness of a moral theory accurately. Most were also able to express a supported opinion. Some, however, repeated previous comments from their answer to 2.1. To achieve the minimum standard for 2.2, candidates must justify their opinion by making evaluative comments about a strength or weakness rather than just listing another general weakness.

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.

Generally, centres included evidence of cross-marking for internal verification purposes. However, some centres did not provide evidence of their internal verification processes. For centres that did not include an overview of internal verification procedures, it was not possible to comment on the effectiveness of their approaches. 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.