

NQ Philosophy Verification Summary 2025–26

Verification information

Subject	Philosophy
Verification activity	Event
Round	1
Date published	April 2026

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
J25D 75	SCQF level 5	Philosophy: Arguments in Action
J25T 75	SCQF level 5	Philosophy: Moral Philosophy
J21C 75	SCQF level 5	Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt with a Scottish Context
J21D 76	SCQF level 6	Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt with a Scottish Context
J25V 76	SCQF level 6	Philosophy: Moral Philosophy

Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Most centres' approaches to assessment were valid and in line with our requirements.

Assessors clearly laid out information on assessment judgements and effectively recorded outcomes that candidates achieved.

Some centres created their own valid approaches, mostly using our prior verification service, which ensured that the approach allowed candidates to meet the standards of unit assessment. Some centres used assessments that were primarily designed to help candidates prepare for the National 5 or Higher course. Where this took place, some candidates were disadvantaged, as it was more difficult for them to achieve certain outcomes.

If centres are making significant adaptations to the assessments from our unit assessment support packs or creating their own assessments, we advise using our free prior verification service. This gives centres confidence that their assessment is fit for purpose and meets national standards.

Evidence included helpful examples of assessors providing feedback to candidates that allowed them to add clarification or more detail in their answer to ensure they met the minimum standard.

Assessment judgements

Centres' assessment judgements were mostly in line with national standards, reliable, and 'accepted' for most candidates. In a very small number of cases, there was evidence that centres were too lenient with their judgements. This was caused by accepting inaccurate definitions as meeting the minimum standard.

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

J25D 75 Philosophy: Arguments in Action (SCQF level 5)

Assessment standard 2.2: some candidates didn't achieve the assessment standard because they didn't include an accurate definition of what makes an argument valid. Centres may find it helpful to refer to the glossary of terms in appendix 3 of the National 5 course specification, published in 2023 (version 5.1) for the accepted definition of 'validity'.

J21C 75 Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt with a Scottish Context (SCQF level 5)

If presenting candidates for this unit, centres should note that the outcomes are different from the counterpart unit — J25F Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt (SCQF level 5). For outcome 2.1 in the Scottish context unit, there is no requirement for both the rationalist and the empiricist studied to be Scottish. The unit specification indicates that the empiricist studied must be Hume, however, it does not stipulate a rationalist. Rationalists could come from any area of the world, for example, centres can use Descartes.

J25V 76 Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (SCQF level 6)

Assessment standard 1.2: a small number of candidates didn't achieve the assessment standard because the assessment approach used didn't demand application of the moral theory. Candidates need to ensure that they explicitly state how the moral theory is applied to a scenario.

J21D 76 Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt with a Scottish Context (SCQF level 6)

For all assessment outcomes, centres consistently met the standards. Centres should note that the appropriate philosopher should be Hume in the candidate response.

General comments

Centres may wish to 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 useful guidance in them, particularly in the glossaries.

Some centres provided evidence that contained significantly more candidate detail than is required for meeting the assessment standards. 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 judged the candidate to have met the minimum standard. 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. Centres demonstrated best practice when they provided a school or department verification policy accompanied by candidate responses with evidence of cross-marking of assessments and processes that were robustly recorded. Centres that do not have access to additional subject specialist verifiers may benefit from contacting our verification team to potentially establish links with other centres.

Several centres had acted on feedback from previous verification by establishing good practice, which allowed candidates to meet the assessment standards effectively.