



National  
Qualifications  
2023

---

## 2023 Philosophy

### Paper 1

### Higher

## Finalised Marking Instructions

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2023

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](mailto: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.

## Knowledge and doubt holistic marking criteria

**Mark essays holistically according to the criteria using a 'best fit' approach. These must be applied in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions for each question.**

### **A response worth 26–30 marks will typically contain:**

- a deep, detailed and clear understanding of the relevant textual material that clearly addresses the question
- well-developed evaluative comments that are likely to be the basis of discussion rather than just being described
- either implicitly or explicitly, a clear, well-supported personal position on the issue that is fully consistent with the descriptive and evaluative material the candidate presents in their response.

### **A response worth 21–25 marks will typically contain:**

- relevant, accurate and detailed descriptive information and textual material that clearly addresses the question
- several well-explained evaluative comments that may themselves be evaluated
- a clear and well-supported personal judgement on the issue (this need not be in the form of a concluding paragraph and may be implicit rather than explicit).

### **A response worth 18–20 marks will typically contain:**

- relevant, mainly accurate and detailed descriptive information and textual material that clearly addresses the question
- some well-explained evaluative comments
- a well-supported personal view on the issue, although this will vary in quality.

### **A response worth 15–17 marks will typically contain:**

- the important descriptive and textual material, although this may be undeveloped and contain some inaccuracies
- at least one appropriate evaluative comment
- a personal view on the issue that is not necessarily well supported.

### **A response worth 12–14 marks will typically contain:**

- some relevant but basic descriptive material with inaccuracies
- no relevant evaluative comment or evaluative comment that shows misunderstanding.
- lacks overall clarity

### **A response worth 9–11 marks will typically contain:**

- some relevant but inaccurate material
- no relevant evaluative comment or evaluative comment that is incoherent.
- a lack of clarity.

### **A response worth 5–8 marks will typically contain:**

- occasionally relevant but mostly inaccurate material
- no evaluative comment
- little or no clarity.

### **A response worth 0–4 marks will typically contain:**

- little detail and/or accuracy
- little or no reference to the question.

In the 0–4 range, award **1 mark** for each relevant point up to a **maximum of 4 marks**.

Marking instructions for each question

Section 1 – KNOWLEDGE AND DOUBT

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
1.	<p>These instructions must be applied in conjunction with the holistic marking criteria for the knowledge and doubt essay.</p> <p>The question requires candidates to demonstrate detailed knowledge, analysis and evaluation of Descartes’ text. The following list contains content that is likely to be included in an appropriate answer. This list is not exhaustive. Candidates may respond to the question in different ways.</p> <p><b>To gain marks for knowledge and understanding, candidates may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explanation of how Descartes arrives at the clear and distinct rule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ‘whatever I perceive very clearly and distinctly is true’</li> <li>– explanation of why Descartes no longer believes the beliefs based on his senses are clear and distinct</li> <li>– explanation of how the power of God has led him to doubt the possibility that his knowledge of mathematical truths is clear &amp; distinct</li> </ul> </li> <li>• the three sources of ideas – Innate, adventitious or imagined by Descartes</li> <li>• explanation of Descartes’ alternative approach – to find an idea that has so much objective reality that its cause must be something that has more formal reality than he possesses</li> <li>• explanation of the Causal Adequacy Principle and what follows from it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ‘there must be at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of that cause . . . It follows from this both that something cannot arise from nothing, and also that what is more perfect – that is, contains in itself more reality – cannot arise from what is less perfect’</li> <li>– The Causal Adequacy Principle depends on the idea that there are different degrees of reality, and applies to objective as well as formal reality</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Descartes’ exploration and rejection of the three possible ways in which he could be the cause of his idea of God</li> <li>• Descartes’ conclusion that his idea of God must be innate and must have been caused by God.</li> </ul>	30

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
	<p><b>To gain marks for analysis and evaluation, candidates may consider:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is it acceptable for Descartes to rely on reason in Meditations 2 and 3, given the level of doubt he introduces with the malicious demon hypothesis?</li> <li>• is it clear what Descartes means by ‘clear’ and ‘distinct’?</li> <li>• is the clear and distinct rule true? Is it reliable?</li> <li>• if Descartes is prepared to doubt that <math>2+3=5</math> because God is powerful enough to make him certain that it is true even if it is false, shouldn’t he have considered the possibility that God might be deceiving him about the Causal Adequacy Principle?</li> <li>• is the Causal Adequacy Principle true? If it is, could it apply to ideas?</li> <li>• is it acceptable for Descartes’ most clear and distinct idea to be one that he cannot actually grasp?</li> <li>• given the many apparent inconsistencies in the concept of God, is it reasonable for Descartes to claim that his idea of God is clear?</li> <li>• what does Descartes mean by ‘the natural light’? Why is he so confident that he can rely on it when he is prepared to doubt knowledge based on reason?</li> <li>• what significance does Descartes’ argument have out with the context of the metaphysical framework he took for granted, with things possessing different degrees of reality?</li> <li>• how can Descartes use his clear and distinct idea of God to prove that God exists when he needs to use his idea of God to prove that whatever he perceives clearly and distinctly is true?</li> <li>• what if it is not possible for us to have any innate ideas?</li> </ul>	

Candidates can achieve marks in the following ranges:

**21–30 marks**

Candidates accurately explain Descartes’ attempt to prove the existence of God, by analysing his claim that whatever he perceives very clearly and distinctly is true and discuss in detail criticisms of the trademark argument while fully engaging with the question. At the top end of this range candidates show depth to their discussion, by engaging in a conversational critique of the issues raised. For example, when discussing the Causal Adequacy Principle they consider the meaning and acceptability of Descartes’ claim that it is clear ‘by the natural light’.

**18–20 marks**

Candidates explain Descartes’ attempt to prove the existence of God, attempt some analysis of his arguments and explain criticisms of them, while addressing the question. Their grasp of the arguments described will be mainly accurate. They might discuss the causal adequacy principle and explain how Descartes attempts to use it to prove God. Essays in this category are likely to contain mainly accurate references to Descartes’ textual material.

**15–17 marks**

Candidates accurately describe Descartes’ attempt to prove God and offer at least one appropriate criticism of an argument, but do not fully engage with the question or the textual material. Essays are likely to contain mainly descriptive material with insufficient analysis and evaluation.

**0–14 marks**

Please refer to the holistic marking criteria for essays in this range.

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
2.	<p>These instructions must be applied in conjunction with the holistic marking criteria for the knowledge and doubt essay.</p> <p><b>To gain marks for knowledge and understanding, candidates may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact</li> <li>• all reasoning about matters of fact, except what we currently perceive or remember, is based on the relation of cause and effect</li> <li>• knowledge about causes is never <i>a priori</i> but always comes from our experience of finding that particular objects are constantly associated with one another</li> <li>• the laws of physics are based on events that we have observed and are not knowable in advance</li> <li>• even after the effect has been suggested, the necessity of that particular effect cannot be determined <i>a priori</i></li> <li>• Hume’s ‘sum of all our experimental conclusions’: that from causes that appear similar we expect similar effects</li> <li>• after establishing that we don’t base our expectation of similar effects from similar causes on deductive reasoning, Hume goes on to argue that it is not based on inductive reasoning either</li> <li>• ‘even after we have experience of the operations of cause and effect, the conclusions we draw from that experience are not based on reasoning or on any process of the understanding’</li> <li>• ‘all inferences from experience are based on the assumption that the future will resemble the past . . . so no arguments from experience can support this resemblance of the past to the future, because all such arguments are based on the assumption of that resemblance’</li> <li>• Hume claims his conclusion that such inferences are not based on reason is supported by the fact that those with limited reasoning ability are still able to draw such inferences.</li> </ul> <p><b>To gain marks for analysis, candidates may discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• why Hume is interested in understanding our beliefs about cause and effect</li> <li>• what are the implications of Hume’s claims about cause and effect?</li> <li>• Hume’s example of Adam and how it supports his claim that knowledge about causes is never <i>a priori</i></li> <li>• the examples Hume gives where people would intuitively agree and disagree with his claim</li> <li>• the reasons why he asserts the principle that causes and effects cannot be discovered by reason also applies in less obvious cases</li> <li>• how Hume’s examples of billiard balls and stones support the claim that an effect cannot be determined <i>a priori</i></li> <li>• why Hume rejects science and applied mathematics as counter-examples to his view that effects can’t be determined <i>a priori</i></li> <li>• the examples of bread to support the claim that we do not use reason to generalise from past experience.</li> </ul>	30

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
	<p><b>To gain marks for evaluation, candidates may discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• criticism of Hume’s claim that any knowledge claims that don’t fall into his categories of relations of ideas or matters of fact are not meaningful and can be cast aside</li> <li>• Kant’s claim that there can be synthetic a priori truths</li> <li>• Kant’s argument that because an understanding of causation is necessary to make sense of experience, our understanding of causation cannot be derived from experience</li> <li>• science has made successful predictions about causation prior to observation</li> <li>• Modern science does allow us to discover the ‘secret powers’ which explain for example, why bread nourishes us</li> <li>• Popper’s suggestion that the scientific process is more like a process of trial and error than inductive reasoning</li> <li>• constant conjunction does not always yield a belief in necessary connection</li> <li>• inferences about causes sometimes come from single observations</li> <li>• the problem of induction has proved to be resistant to attempts at a solution since Hume first expressed it.</li> </ul>	

Candidates can achieve marks in the following ranges:

**21–30 marks**

Candidates accurately explain Hume’s theory of cause and effect, as set out in the Enquiry Section 4, examine some of Hume’s examples and arguments used to support his position, and discuss criticisms of it in detail, while fully engaging with the question. At the top end of this range candidates show depth to their discussion, by engaging in a conversational critique of the issues raised. For example, rather than just stating that Hume rejects science and mathematics as counterexamples to his view that effects cannot be determined *a priori*, they may discuss how and why he rejects them and consider whether he is right to do so.

**18–20 marks**

Candidates explain Hume’s theory of cause and effect as set out in the Enquiry Section 4, attempt some analysis of it and explain criticisms, while addressing the question. They might also describe some examples Hume uses to support his position. Essays are likely to contain mainly accurate references to Hume’s textual material.

**15–17 marks**

Candidates accurately describe Hume’s claim that knowledge about causes is never known a priori and offer some explanation of why he believes this is the case. They will give at least one appropriate criticism of it but may not fully engage with the question. Essays may contain irrelevant descriptions of impressions and ideas from the material in Section 2, and insufficient focus on Hume’s theory of cause and effect.

**0–14 marks**

Please refer to the holistic marking criteria for essays in this range.

## Moral philosophy situation holistic marking criteria

Mark essays holistically according to the criteria using a 'best fit' approach. These must be applied in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions for each question.

### A response worth 26–30 marks will typically contain:

- a deep, detailed and clear understanding of the relevant material in relation to the moral theory
- a detailed, methodical and sophisticated response to the situation
- well-developed evaluative comments that are likely to be the basis of discussion rather than just being described
- either implicitly or explicitly, a clear, well-supported personal position on the issues raised by the situation fully consistent with the descriptive and evaluative material the candidate presents in their response.

### A response worth 21–25 marks will typically contain:

- relevant, accurate and detailed descriptive material in relation to the moral theory that clearly addresses the question
- a detailed and methodical response to the situation
- several well-explained and developed evaluative comments that may themselves be evaluated
- a clear and well-supported personal judgement on issues raised by the situation (this need not be in the form of a concluding paragraph and may be implicit rather than explicit).

### A response worth 18–20 marks will typically contain:

- relevant, mainly accurate and detailed descriptive material in relation to the moral theory that clearly addresses the question
- a variable response to the situation in terms of detail and relevance
- several well-explained evaluative comments
- a well-supported personal view on issues raised by the situation, although this will vary in quality.

### A response worth 15–17 marks will typically contain:

- the important descriptive material, although this may be undeveloped and contain some inaccuracies
- reference to the situation but with little depth
- at least one appropriate evaluative comment
- a personal view on issues raised by the situation that is not necessarily well supported

### A response worth 12–14 marks will typically contain:

- some relevant but basic descriptive material with inaccuracies
- lacks overall clarity
- no relevant evaluative comment or evaluative comment that shows misunderstanding.

### A response worth 9–11 marks will typically contain:

- some relevant but inaccurate material
- no evaluative comment or evaluative comment that is incoherent
- a lack of clarity.

### A response worth 5–8 marks will typically contain:

- occasionally relevant but mostly inaccurate material
- no evaluative comment
- little or no clarity.

### A response worth 0–4 marks will typically contain:

- little detail and/or accuracy
- little or no reference to the moral theory.

In the 0–4 range, award 1 mark for each relevant point up to a maximum of 4 marks.

Section 2 – MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
3.	<p>These must be applied in conjunction with the holistic marking criteria for the moral philosophy situation essay.</p> <p>Candidates should discuss the given situation in the context of Utilitarianism. The following list contains content that is likely to be included in an appropriate answer. This list is not exhaustive. Candidates may respond to the question in different ways. Essays at the top of this range will contain a clear line of argument from start to finish.</p> <p><b>To gain marks for knowledge and understanding, candidates may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the principles of classical utilitarianism – consequentialism, hedonism and equity</li> <li>• Bentham’s hedonic calculus – properties of the happiness (intensity, duration, certainty and propinquity); properties of the action (fecundity and purity, that is, a consideration of future consequences); extent, that is, the need to calculate the effects on all those affected by the action</li> <li>• act utilitarianism – an action is right if it maximises happiness</li> <li>• rule utilitarianism – an action is right if it conforms to a rule that is in place because having that rule maximises happiness</li> <li>• rule utilitarians will advocate the use of rules as a way of ensuring that people perform actions which maximise happiness.</li> </ul> <p><b>To gain marks for analysis and evaluation, candidates are likely to discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how Bentham’s calculus may be applied in this situation, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– how many people will be affected by the action in positive and negative ways? For example, the immediacy and intensity of the pleasure to the country which is allocated the medication</li> <li>– the likelihood that this will lead to further benefits such as better health in general which enhances quality of life, leads to an improved life expectancy in the country</li> <li>– duration would arguably be long lasting</li> <li>– there would be no immediate pleasure (and there would be an increase in pain) in not treating everyone in your own country, especially as the disease is not guaranteed to be less severe, only less likely to be severe</li> </ul> </li> <li>• local versus global consequences</li> <li>• short term versus long-term consequences</li> <li>• predicted versus actual consequences</li> <li>• the pros and cons of Act versus Rule utilitarianism in this scenario</li> <li>• the equity principle ignores the fact that we may have special obligations to those in our own country whether a utilitarian response is appropriate in this scenario.</li> </ul>	30

Candidates can achieve marks in the following ranges:

**21–30 marks**

Candidates explain the main features of utilitarianism, analyse and discuss the utilitarian approach by referring to the given situation in the context of the Greatest Happiness Principle, and discuss criticisms of utilitarianism, while fully engaging with the question. Candidates give a very detailed account of utilitarianism and are very clear on how utilitarians would deal with this situation. At the top end of this range candidates show depth in their discussion, by engaging in a conversational critique of the principles involved. For example, when discussing global versus local consequences, candidates consider whether it is morally right to prioritise the people in our own country, or if global happiness is the ultimate good.

**18–20 marks**

Candidates accurately describe the main features of utilitarianism, analyse the utilitarian approach by referring to the given situation in the context of the Greatest Happiness Principle, and explain criticisms of utilitarianism with reference to the given situation, while addressing the question. Candidates show a clear understanding of the key features of utilitarianism, for example they accurately demonstrate an understanding of how to apply the hedonic calculus.

**15–17 marks**

Candidates describe the main features of utilitarianism, explain the utilitarian approach by responding to the given situation in the context of the Greatest Happiness Principle, and offer at least one appropriate criticism of utilitarianism, but do not fully engage with the question. Candidates show a basic understanding of utilitarianism, for example they may mention the distinction between Act and Rule utilitarianism, but their comments may contain inaccuracies and lack development.

**0–14 marks**

Please refer to the holistic marking criteria for essays in this range.

## Moral philosophy quotation holistic marking criteria

Mark essays holistically according to the criteria using a 'best fit' approach. These must be applied in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions for each question.

**A response worth 26–30 marks will typically contain:**

- a detailed and clear understanding of the relevant material in relation to the moral theory
- a detailed, methodical and sophisticated response to the issues raised by the quotation
- well-developed evaluative comments that are likely to be the basis of discussion rather than just being described
- either implicitly or explicitly, a clear, well-supported personal position on the issues raised by the quotation that is fully consistent with the descriptive and evaluative material the candidate presents in their response.

**A response worth 21–25 marks will typically contain:**

- relevant, accurate and detailed descriptive material in relation to the moral theory that clearly addresses the question
- a detailed and methodical response to the issues raised by the quotation
- several well-explained and developed evaluative comments that may themselves be evaluated
- a clear and well-supported personal judgement on the issues raised by the quotation (this need not be in the form of a concluding paragraph and may be implicit rather than explicit).

**A response worth 18–20 marks will typically contain:**

- relevant, mainly accurate and detailed descriptive material in relation to the moral theory that clearly addresses the question
- a response to the issues raised by the quotation which, in the main, shows detail and relevance
- several well-explained evaluative comments
- a well-supported personal view on the issues raised by the quotation, although this will vary in quality.

**A response worth 15–17 marks will typically contain:**

- the essential descriptive material, although this may be undeveloped and contain some inaccuracies
- reference to the issues raised by the quotation but with little depth
- at least one appropriate evaluative comment
- a personal view on the issues raised by the quotation that is not necessarily well supported.

**A response worth 12–14 marks will typically contain:**

- some relevant but basic descriptive material with inaccuracies
- no evaluative comment or evaluative comment that shows misunderstanding.
- lacks overall clarity.

**A response worth 9–11 marks will typically contain:**

- some relevant but mostly inaccurate material.
- no relevant evaluative comment or evaluative comment that is incoherent
- a lack of clarity

**A response worth 5–8 marks will typically contain:**

- occasionally relevant but very inaccurate material
- no evaluative comment
- little or no clarity.

**A response worth 0–4 marks will typically contain:**

- little detail and/or accuracy
- little or no reference to the moral theory.

In the 0–4 range, award 1 mark for each relevant point up to a maximum of 4 marks.

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
4.	<p>These must be applied in conjunction with the holistic marking criteria for the moral philosophy quotation essay.</p> <p>Candidates must engage with the given quotation in the context of Utilitarianism. The following list contains content that is likely to be included in an appropriate answer. This list is not exhaustive. Candidates may respond to the question in different ways.</p> <p><b>To gain marks for knowledge and understanding, candidates may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• classical utilitarianism as an example of a consequentialist theory</li> <li>• the greatest happiness principle and its component parts</li> <li>• Jeremy Bentham’s hedonic calculus and all its component parts</li> <li>• John Stuart Mill’s higher and lower pleasures</li> <li>• Mill’s competent judges</li> <li>• the distinction between act and rule utilitarianism.</li> </ul> <p><b>To gain marks for analysis and evaluation, candidates may discuss the quotation as a fair and/or unfair criticism, for example:</b></p> <p>Points supporting the criticism may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the difficulty with quantifying happiness: different pleasures are so different as to be incommensurable, the 7 variables of Bentham’s scale make quantification extremely complex</li> <li>• the difficulty with predicting consequences: it is not obvious that we can confidently predict consequences with enough accuracy to identify the best outcome in most situations, should we focus on long-term or short-term consequences, local or global consequences?</li> <li>• the difficulty of being unrealistically demanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Utilitarianism asks us to take many things into consideration and always to strive for the highest possible good, we will often, if not almost always, be required to act in a way disadvantageous to ourselves</li> <li>– if we always have to maximise ‘the good’, it seems like we never get time for ourselves – carried to extremes, I’m never free to just buy a coffee and watch a movie</li> <li>– Utilitarianism seems to run counter to some of our natural intuitions – we feel we have special obligations or duties towards family and friends, and this does not sit easily with the Utilitarian position that everyone’s happiness is considered equally</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mill’s higher and lower pleasures don’t really offer any practical advice as to how and when we should prioritise higher pleasures and so this makes it difficult to make use of in any real-life situations</li> <li>• the criticism that if everyone lives like an act utilitarian, we would undermine the happiness we are aiming for: for example if you know others are always calculating what would create most happiness you know they are likely to lie to you when the lie will create more happiness than the truth, this fosters deceit and distrust.</li> </ul>	30

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
	<p>Points against the criticism may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bentham was correct that human nature is guided by the intent to seek out pleasure and avoid pain and suffering</li> <li>• Bentham’s calculus attempts to outline how we can compare dissimilar pleasures</li> <li>• Bentham’s calculus with its 7 variables, allows us to consider the different aspects of the consequences, taking into account immediate effects of our actions, as well as long-term, short-term consequences and harmful effects of our actions</li> <li>• Bentham did not think that it was always necessary to follow the decision-making procedure of the Hedonic Calculus. ‘It is not to be expected that this process should be strictly pursued previously to every moral judgement, or to every legislative or judicial operation’</li> <li>• although demanding it is right that a moral theory would be so. It is not always easy to do the right thing</li> <li>• rule utilitarianism arguably gets around the criticism that living like an act utilitarian undermines the aim to maximise happiness.</li> </ul>	

Candidates can achieve marks in the following ranges:

**21–30 marks**

Candidates should explain in depth the main features of Utilitarianism, with a focus on how practical Utilitarianism is to apply in real life situations. They may consider whether it is, even in principle, a ‘great moral theory’. Candidates will give a very detailed explanation of Utilitarianism as a consequentialist moral theory and the use of the hedonic calculus as a means of calculating overall pleasure and pain. They will discuss the implications of the various aspects of Utilitarianism in relation to the criticism. At the top end of this range candidates will discuss whether the criticism in the quotation is fair or unfair while evaluating in depth how Utilitarians might respond to the criticism.

**18–20 marks**

Candidates should accurately describe the main features of Utilitarianism, explain use of the Greatest Happiness Principle in moral decision making and respond to the quotation by making comments about whether the criticism is fair. They may also consider how Utilitarians might respond to the criticism. Candidates should show a clear understanding of Utilitarianism, for example they will demonstrate how Utilitarians will focus on outcomes to determine the right thing to do in any situation.

**15–17 marks**

Candidates should describe the main features of Utilitarianism, make some reference to the greatest happiness principle and its application to moral decisions and respond to the quotation by making at least one comment about whether the criticism is fair. Candidates will tend to show a basic understanding of Utilitarianism as a consequentialist theory, for example they will explain how we should focus on maximising happiness and minimising pain and suffering to make moral decisions, although the explanation may lack clarity.

**0–14 marks**

Please refer to the holistic marking criteria for essays in this range.

**[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]**