



National
Qualifications
2025

2025 Philosophy

Paper 1

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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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.

Marking instructions for each question

Section 1 – KNOWLEDGE AND DOUBT – 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
- well-developed evaluative comments that are likely to be the basis of discussion rather than just being explained
- either implicitly or explicitly, a clear and 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
- either implicitly or explicitly, a clear and well-supported personal judgement on the issue.

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 justified 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 may simply be stated.

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 is inappropriate.
- lacks cohesion.

A response worth 9–11 marks will typically contain:

- some relevant but often inaccurate material
- no relevant evaluative comment or evaluative comment that is inappropriate
- little clarity.

A response worth 5–8 marks will typically contain:

- occasionally relevant but mostly inaccurate material
- no relevant evaluative comment or evaluative comment that is incoherent
- little 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.

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 Hume’s 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>To gain marks for knowledge and understanding, a candidate’s explanation is likely to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hume’s use of the word ‘perceptions’ as the contents of the mind • Hume’s distinction between impressions and ideas is made on the basis of their force and vivacity (liveliness) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hume’s example of the pain of experiencing heat versus remembering that experience – Hume’s examples of feeling anger and love versus imagining feeling those emotions • impressions are associated with our outward sensations and inward reflections • ideas are associated with memory and imagination and the activity of reflecting on our impressions • the distinction between simple and complex ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – simple ideas are copies of impressions – complex ideas can be formed by the imagination using one of four processes: they can combine (compound), transpose, enlarge (augment) or shrink (diminish) ideas copied from impressions – copy principle – all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones: complex thoughts are made up of simple ideas, copied from earlier feelings or sensations • Hume’s two arguments to support the copy principle: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. any idea that seems to lack relevant corresponding impressions can be traced back to simple ideas that have been worked upon using the processes of the imagination, eg the idea of God as a complex idea ii. when the relevant impression has been denied through malfunctioning senses or the absence of relevant experiences or absence due to species limitations, the associated idea cannot be formed • the missing shade of blue as a counter-example to the copy principle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hume says it should not undermine the theory as a whole because it is so singular it is scarcely worth observing. 	30

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
	<p>To gain marks for analysis and evaluation, a candidate’s discussion may include some of the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well Hume’s atomistic theory fits in with our scientific understanding of the world • concerns relating to perceptions – impressions and ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – are all ideas really less lively and vivid than impressions? – Hume defends his position against the criticism that some ideas can be more lively than impressions by pointing out that the distinction between impressions and ideas is only confined to the healthy mind. Is his defence adequate? – by simply dividing the mind’s contents into impressions and ideas, is Hume presenting a naïve psychology? – are the operations of the imagination sufficient to explain how we acquire complex ideas? • concerns about the distinction between simple and complex perceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – would Hume have to abandon empiricism if the simple/complex distinction could not account for acts of the imagination? – Is Hume’s account of simple ideas coherent? • concerns about the copy principle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is Hume right to suggest that we cannot find an idea that does not derive from a sense impression? Can’t we have innate ideas? – Might very young infants be able to understand concepts that could not have been the product of experience? – How plausible is it that someone who is blind from birth would have no notion, or idea of colour? • concerns about the missing shade of blue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is it really scarcely worth observing? – would describing the missing shade of blue as a complex idea provide a sufficient explanation for how we are able to imagine it? – should Hume have accepted that any counter-example to a universal claim disproves the claim? • does Hume’s empiricism collapse into scepticism because it does not guarantee knowledge of an external world? If so, should Hume have been concerned by this? 	

Candidates can achieve marks in the following ranges:

21–30 marks

Candidates accurately explain Hume’s theory of perception, as set out in the Enquiry Section II. Their analysis may include examination of what Hume means by terms such as ‘force and liveliness’ and consider how our apparently free thought is really confined within very narrow limits. In evaluation they will discuss criticisms of the theory 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. E.g. they may consider the implications of the criticisms they discuss on the success of his empirical foundation for knowledge.

18–20 marks

Candidates explain Hume’s theory of perception, as set out in the Enquiry Section II, attempt some analysis of it and explain criticisms, while addressing the question. Their grasp of Hume’s arguments for the Copy Principle will be mainly accurate. They are likely to discuss the missing shade of blue, explain Hume’s position on it and consider whether it is really a singular example. Essays in this category are likely to contain mainly accurate references to Hume’s textual material.

15–17 marks

Candidates describe Hume’s theory of perception, as set out in the Enquiry Section II, and offer at least one appropriate criticism of it, but do not fully engage with the question or the textual material. Essays are likely to contain limited descriptive material with little analysis and evaluation.

0–14 marks

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

Section 2 – MORAL PHILOSOPHY - 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 information and 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 explained
- either implicitly or explicitly, a clear and 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 information 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
- either implicitly or explicitly, a clear and well-supported personal judgement on issues raised by the situation.

A response worth 18–20 marks will typically contain:

- relevant, mainly accurate and detailed descriptive information 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 justified 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 may simply be stated.

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 is inappropriate
- lacks cohesion.

A response worth 9–11 marks will typically contain:

- some relevant but often inaccurate material
- no relevant evaluative comment or evaluative comment that is inappropriate
- little clarity.

A response worth 5–8 marks will typically contain:

- occasionally relevant but mostly inaccurate material
- no relevant evaluative comment or evaluative comment that is incoherent
- little 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**.

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
2.	<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 Kantian ethics. 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>To gain marks for knowledge and understanding, candidates may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant’s moral theory is deontological (duty-based) • Kant’s claim that we have duties, meaning certain things are right or wrong in themselves, regardless of consequences • Kant’s emphasis on the sovereignty of reason and how this relates to duty • the good will: to have a good will is to be motivated to do our duty • Kant’s claim that the good will is the only intrinsic good • what Kant says about duty versus inclination: in determining our duty we must take no account of our inclinations because the demands of duty are categorical • the categorical imperative: formulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – universalisability: ‘Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law’ – human beings as ends in themselves, never only a means to an end: ‘So act as to treat humanity, both in your own person, and in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never simply as a means • applying the categorical imperative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the process of universalising the maxim – contradiction in conception and contradiction in the will – the distinction between perfect duties and imperfect duties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. duties to the self b. duties to others. – distinction between treating someone as ‘an end’ and treating someone as ‘a means only’ 	30

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
	<p>To gain marks for analysis and evaluation, candidates are likely to discuss some of the following:</p> <p>Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in this situation Kant would want you to act with a good will - to be motivated to do your duty regardless of your inclinations. You may feel inclined to lie to help the innocent people you are hiding, but that should not be a factor in determining what the right thing to do is • applying the categorical imperative test to the situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the contradiction in conception - the maxim ‘lie in order to save someone from harm’ could not be universalised without contradiction. It would lead to a contradiction in conception. This would mean we have a perfect duty not to lie – the contradiction in the will – there would be a contradiction in the will in terms of the maxim ‘never help those in need’ which would apply to the innocent people you were hiding. This would mean we have an imperfect duty to help those in need. – lying in order to save someone from harm would be using the person you lied to simply as a means to an end. It would not be something they could rationally consent to and takes away their autonomy <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would there be a conflict of duties? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – if we are dealing with a perfect duty versus an imperfect duty then Kant would say there is no conflict • would Kant consider evading the question a violation of your duty? • the difficulty of discounting consequences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Does Kant ignore the intuition that consequences of actions determine their moral value? • the problem of disregarding inclinations and performing one’s duty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is it a problem that Kantian ethics is insensitive to individual circumstances and people’s feelings? • is Kant right that we should respect the dignity of even those who seek to harm others? • if everyone followed Kantian ethics would this obviate the need to consider consequences of individual actions completely? • is it really morally praiseworthy to focus on doing our own duty rather than considering consequences or the way that we feel? 	

Candidates can achieve marks in the following ranges:

21-30 marks

Candidates explain the main features of Kantian ethics, analyse and discuss the Kantian approach by referring to the situation in the context of the categorical imperative, and discuss criticisms of Kantian ethics, while fully engaging with the question. Candidates give a very detailed account of Kantian ethics and are very clear on how Kant would offer advice in 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, candidates interrogate Kant's position that duty is the sole deciding factor in determining moral worth.

18-20 marks

Candidates accurately describe the main features of Kantian ethics, analyse the Kantian approach by referring to the situation in the context of the categorical imperative, and explain criticisms of Kantianism, while addressing the question. Candidates show a clear understanding of the key features of Kantian ethics: for example, they may accurately demonstrate what Kant meant by 'So act as to treat humanity, both in your own person, and in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never simply as a means'.

15-17 marks

Candidates describe the main features of Kantian ethics, explain the Kantian approach by responding to the situation in the context of the categorical imperative, and offer at least one appropriate criticism of Kantianism, but may not fully engage with the question. Candidates show a basic understanding of Kantian ethics: for example, they may mention contradiction in conception and contradiction in the will, but their comments may contain inaccuracies and lack development. Essays are likely to contain limited descriptive material with little analysis and evaluation.

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 information and 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 explained
- either implicitly or explicitly, a clear and 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 information 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
- Either implicitly, or explicitly, a clear and well-supported personal judgement on the issues raised by the quotation.

A response worth 18–20 marks will typically contain:

- relevant, mainly accurate and detailed descriptive information 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 justified 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 may simply be stated.

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 is inappropriate.
- lacks cohesion

A response worth 9–11 marks will typically contain:

- some relevant but often inaccurate material
- no relevant evaluative comment or evaluative comment that is inappropriate
- little clarity.

A response worth 5–8 marks will typically contain:

- occasionally relevant but mostly inaccurate material
- No evaluative comment or evaluative comment that is incoherent
- little 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.

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 quotation essay. Candidates must engage with the given quotation in the context of Kant's moral theory. 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>To gain marks for knowledge and understanding, candidates may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant's moral theory is deontological (duty-based) • Kant's claim that we have duties, meaning certain things are right or wrong in themselves, regardless of consequences • Kant's emphasis on the sovereignty of reason and how this relates to duty • the good will: to have a good will is to be motivated to do our duty • Kant's claim that the good will is the only intrinsic good • what Kant says about duty versus inclination: in determining our duty we must take no account of our inclinations because the demands of duty are categorical • the categorical imperative: formulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universalisability: 'Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law' - human beings as ends in themselves, never only a means to an end: 'So act as to treat humanity, both in your own person, and in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never simply as a means • applying the categorical imperative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the process of universalising the maxim - contradiction in conception and contradiction in the will - the distinction between perfect duties and imperfect duties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. duties to the self b. duties to others. - distinction between treating someone as 'an end' and treating someone as 'a means only' 	30

Question	Detailed marking instructions for this question	Max mark
	<p>To gain marks for analysis and evaluation, candidates may discuss the quotation in different ways eg:</p> <p>Candidate may use their own examples to analyse a Kantian response to the quotation.</p> <p>Candidates may discuss the quotation by considering some of the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is it more intuitively ethical to praise the intentions of our actions rather than, for example, the consequences? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – can we ever know what a person’s intentions are? Can we even be sure of our own intentions? – do people always just have one intention when acting? – why are these important considerations for Kant? • does Kant’s focus on the good will avoid the disadvantage of consequentialist theories that they are subject to the tyranny of the majority? • if everyone followed Kantian ethics would this obviate the need to consider consequences of individual actions completely? • does the end in itself formulation aim to minimise suffering by promoting the fundamental dignity of humanity? • is the need to universalise maxims unrealistic because of its inflexibility? • does Kantian ethics’ insistence on perfect duties ignore the complexities of moral decision making? Should morality allow for exceptions especially to reduce suffering? • does consequentialism deal with this more successfully? 	

Candidates can achieve marks in the following ranges:

21–30 marks

Candidates should explain in depth the main features of Kantianism, with a focus on its duty-based nature and how individuals find perfect and imperfect duties using the categorical imperative. They will evaluate in depth possible responses to the quotation. At the top end of this range candidates will engage in a conversational critique of Kantianism in relation to the issues raised by the quotation. Candidates may, for example, give a very detailed consideration of duties to the self and others through the use of the Categorical imperative.

18–20 marks

Candidates accurately describe the main features of Kantian ethics, analyse the Kantian approach by referring to the quotation with reference to the categorical imperative, and explain criticisms of Kantianism, while addressing the issues raised. Candidates show a clear understanding of the key features of Kantian ethics: for example, they may accurately demonstrate the distinction that Kant made between perfect and imperfect duties.

15–17 marks

Candidates should describe the main features of Kantianism, makes some reference to Kant's use of duty to make moral decisions and respond to the quotation by making at least one appropriate comment. Candidates will tend to show a basic understanding of Kantianism as a duty-based theory: for example, they may explain how we know what our duty is, but their comments may contain inaccuracies and lack development. Essays are likely to contain limited descriptive material with little analysis and evaluation.

0–14 marks

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

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]