

# Philosophy & Reason subject report

2023 cohort

February 2024





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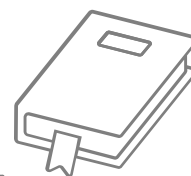
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# Introduction

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Throughout 2023, schools and the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) continued to improve outcomes for students in the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system. These efforts were consolidated by the cumulative experience in teaching, learning and assessment of the current General and General (Extension) senior syllabuses, and school engagement in QCAA endorsement and confirmation processes and external assessment marking. The current evaluation of the QCE system will further enhance understanding of the summative assessment cycle and will inform future QCAA subject reports.

The annual subject reports seek to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement of internal and external assessment processes for all Queensland schools. The 2023 subject report is the culmination of the partnership between schools and the QCAA. It addresses school-based assessment design and judgments, and student responses to external assessment for this subject. In acknowledging effective practices and areas for refinement, it offers schools timely and evidence-based guidance to further develop student learning and assessment experiences for 2024.

The report also includes information about:

- how schools have applied syllabus objectives in the design and marking of internal assessments
- how syllabus objectives have been applied in the marking of external assessments
- patterns of student achievement.

The report promotes continuous improvement by:

- identifying effective practices in the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessments
- recommending where and how to enhance the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessment instruments
- providing examples that demonstrate best practice.

Schools are encouraged to reflect on the effective practices identified for each assessment, consider the recommendations to strengthen assessment design and explore the authentic student work samples provided.

## Audience and use

This report should be read by school leaders, subject leaders and teachers to:

- inform teaching and learning and assessment preparation
- assist in assessment design practice
- assist in making assessment decisions
- help prepare students for internal and external assessment.

The report is publicly available to promote transparency and accountability. Students, parents, community members and other education stakeholders can use it to learn about the assessment practices and outcomes for senior subjects.

## Report preparation

The report includes analyses of data and other information from endorsement, confirmation and external assessment processes. It also includes advice from the chief confirmer, chief endorser and chief marker, developed in consultation with and support from QCAA subject matter experts.

## Subject highlights

**38**

schools offered  
Philosophy &  
Reason

**81.6%**

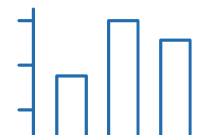
of students  
completed  
4 units

**97.28%**

of students  
received a C  
or higher



# Subject data summary



## Subject completion

The following data includes students who completed the General subject.

**Note:** All data is correct as at January 2024. Where percentages are provided, these are rounded to two decimal places and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Number of schools that offered Philosophy & Reason: 38.

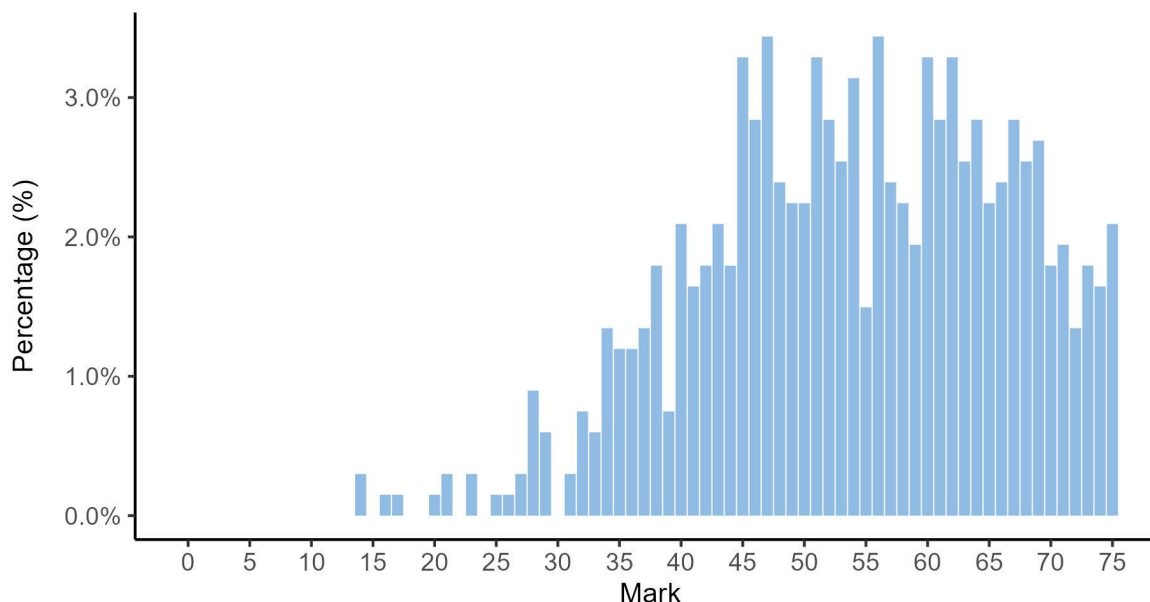
Completion of units	Unit 1	Unit 2	Units 3 and 4
Number of students completed	810	752	661

## Units 1 and 2 results

Number of students	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Unit 1	777	33
Unit 2	709	43

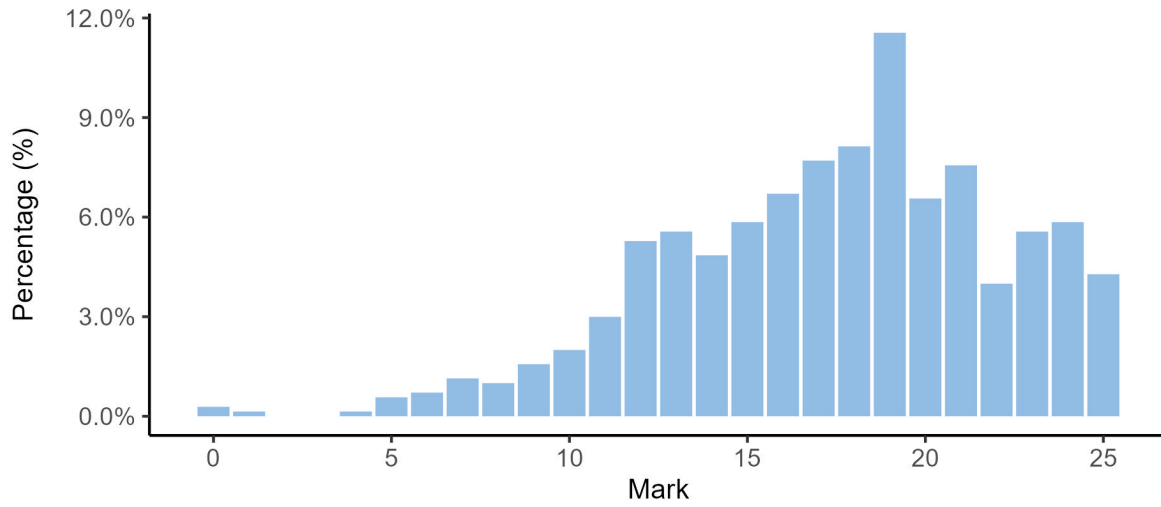
## Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results

### Total marks for IA

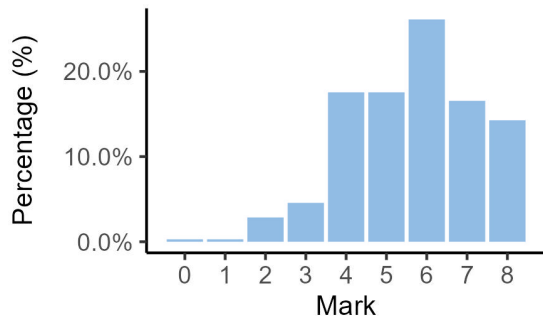


## IA1 marks

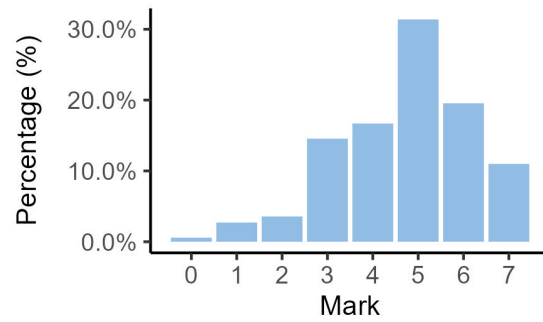
### IA1 total



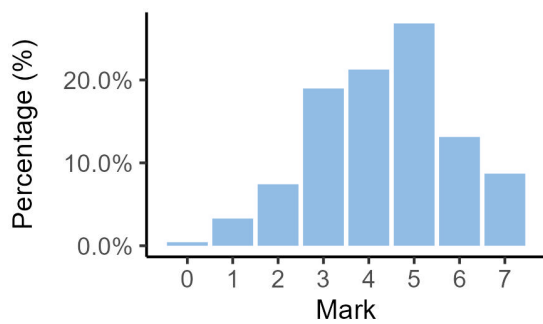
### IA1 Criterion: Defining, using and explaining



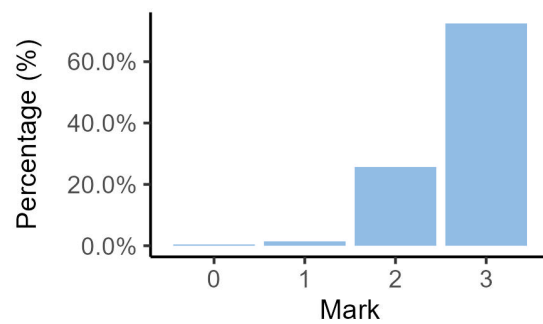
### IA1 Criterion: Interpreting and analysing



### IA1 Criterion: Organising, synthesising and evaluating

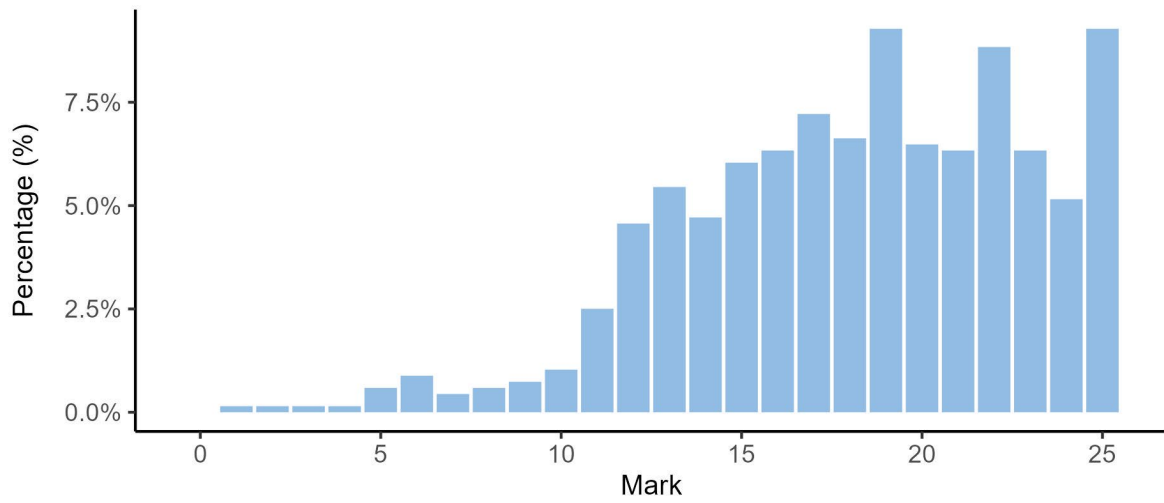


### IA1 Criterion: Creating and communicating

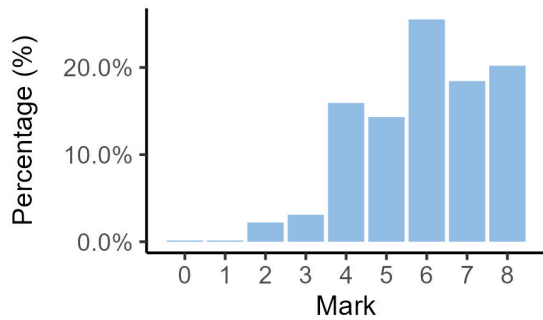


## IA2 marks

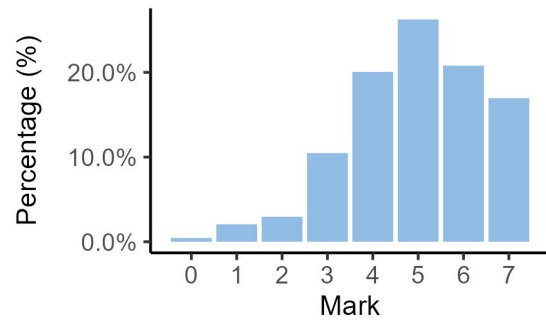
### IA2 total



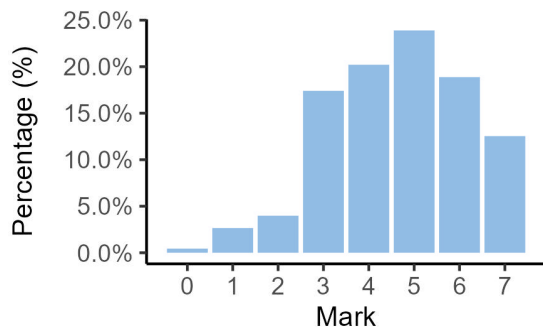
### IA2 Criterion: Defining, using and explaining



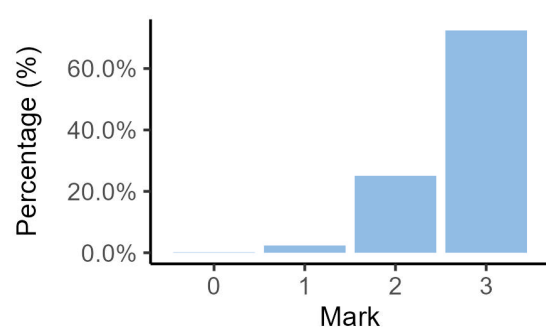
### IA2 Criterion: Interpreting and analysing



### IA2 Criterion: Organising, synthesising and evaluating



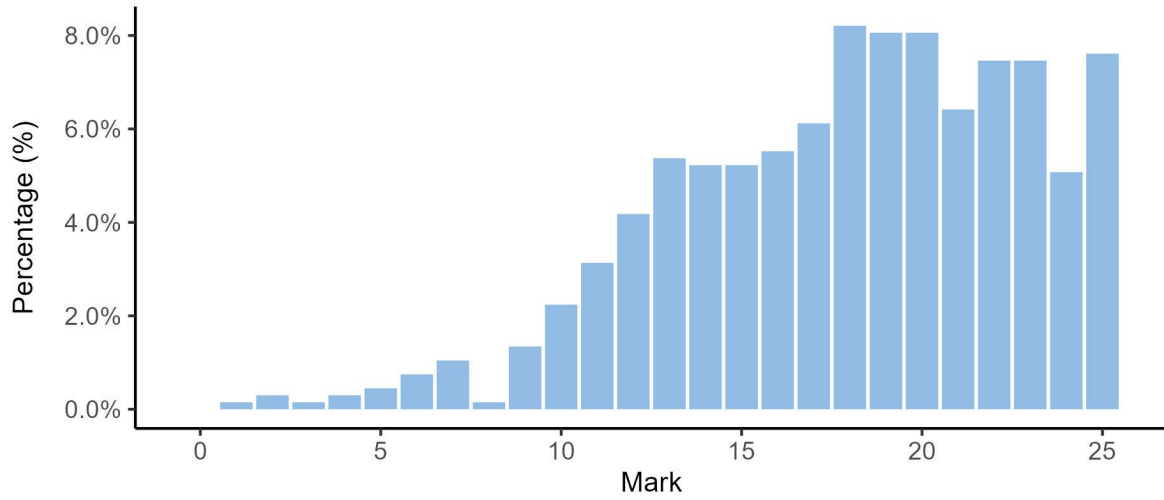
### IA2 Criterion: Creating and communicating



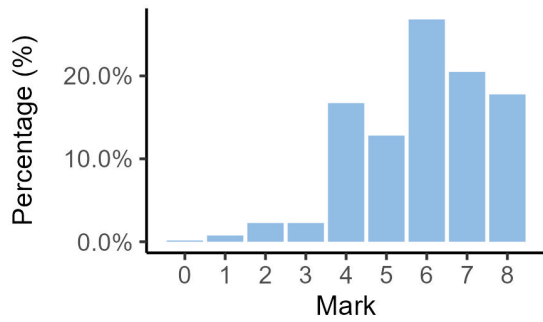


## IA3 marks

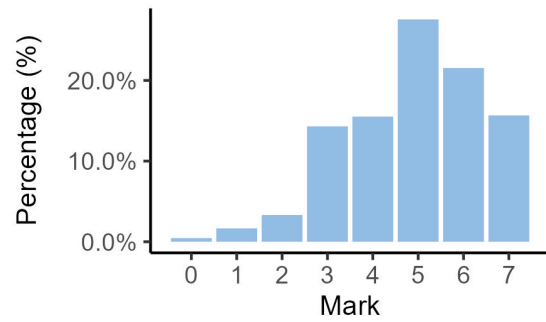
### IA3 total



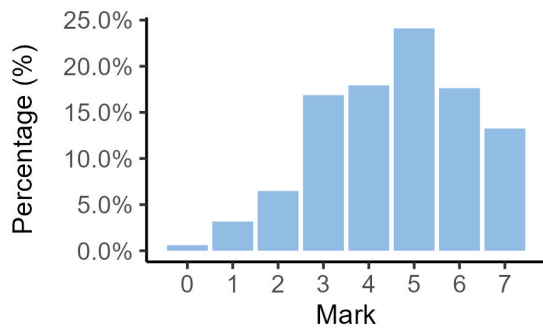
### IA3 Criterion: Defining, using and explaining



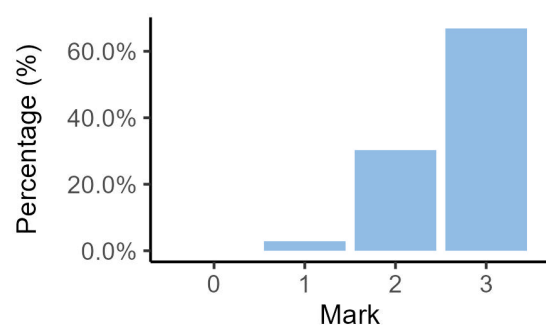
### IA3 Criterion: Interpreting and analysing



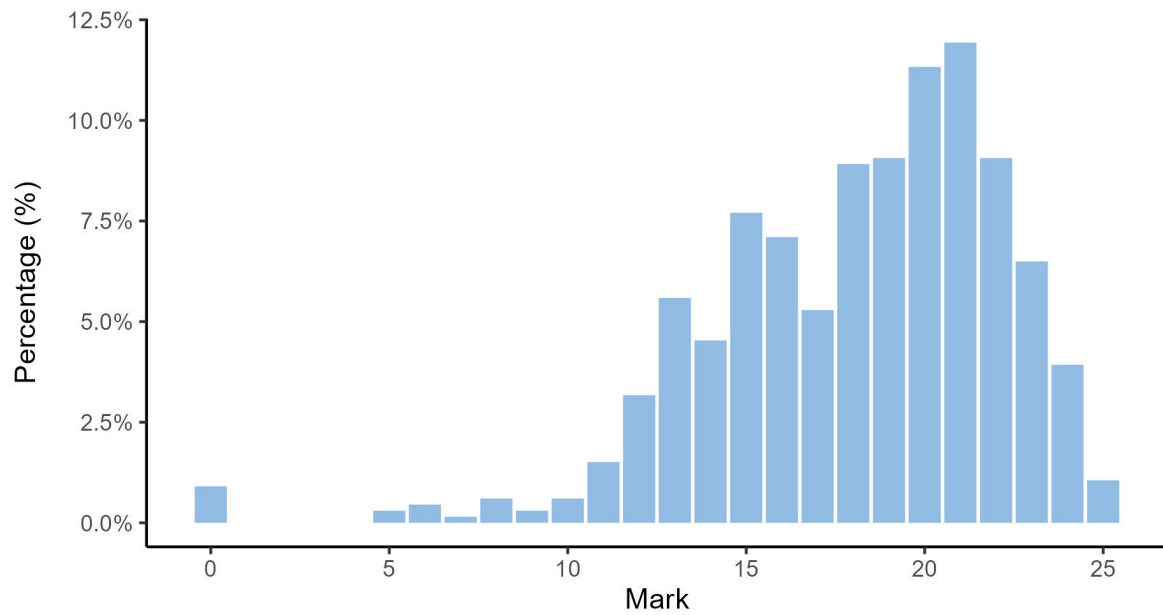
### IA3 Criterion: Organising, synthesising and evaluating



### IA3 Criterion: Creating and communicating

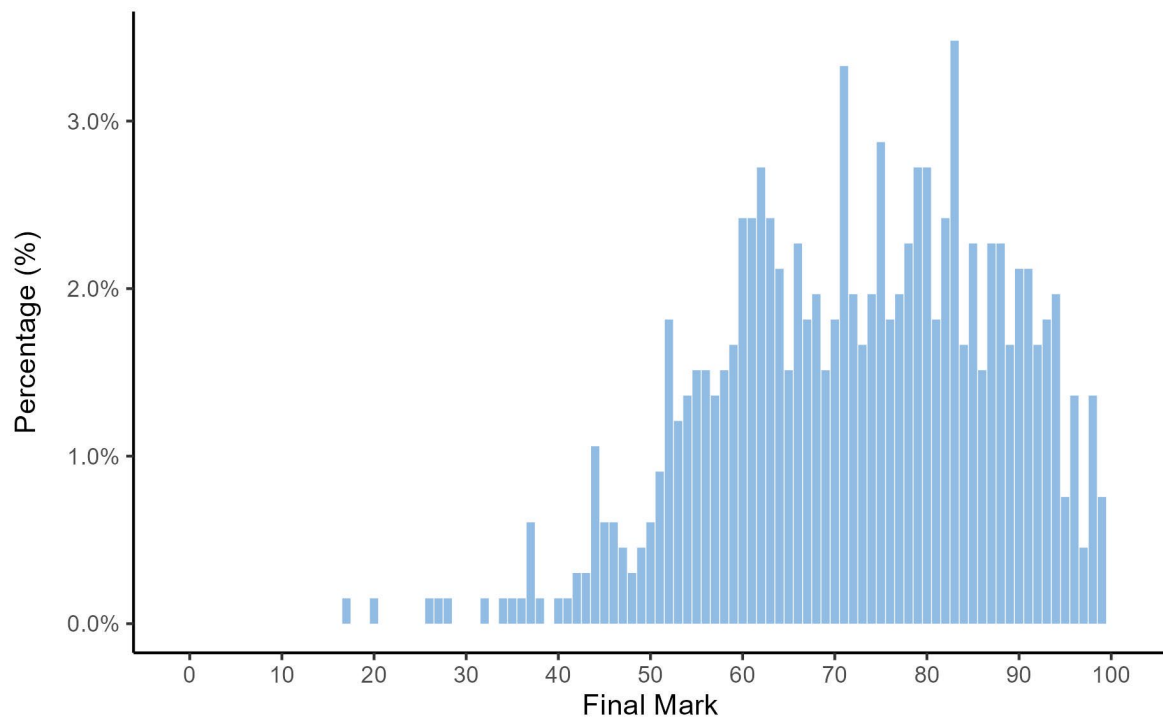


## External assessment (EA) marks



## Final subject results

### Final marks for IA and EA



## Grade boundaries

The grade boundaries are determined using a process to compare results on a numeric scale to the reporting standards.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Marks achieved	100–83	82–65	64–43	42–19	18–0

## Distribution of standards

The number of students who achieved each standard across the state is as follows.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Number of students	195	254	194	17	1

# Internal assessment



The following information and advice relate to the assessment design and assessment decisions for each IA in Units 3 and 4. These instruments have undergone quality assurance processes informed by the attributes of quality assessment (validity, accessibility and reliability).

## Endorsement

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. These attributes are categorised further as priorities for assessment, and each priority can be further broken down into assessment practices.

Data presented in the Assessment design section identifies the reasons why IA instruments were not endorsed at Application 1, by the priority for assessments. An IA may have been identified more than once for a priority for assessment, e.g. it may have demonstrated a misalignment to both the subject matter and the assessment objective/s.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 9.6.

### Percentage of instruments endorsed in Application 1

Number of instruments submitted	IA1	IA2	IA3
Total number of instruments	38	38	38
Percentage endorsed in Application 1	44%	63%	39%

## Confirmation

Confirmation is the quality assurance process based on the attribute of reliability. The QCAA uses provisional criterion marks determined by teachers to identify the samples of student responses that schools are required to submit for confirmation.

Confirmation samples are representative of the school's decisions about the quality of student work in relation to the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG), and are used to make decisions about the cohort's results.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 9.7.

The following table includes the percentage agreement between the provisional marks and confirmed marks by assessment instrument. The Assessment decisions section of this report for each assessment instrument identifies the agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks by criterion.

### Number of samples reviewed and percentage agreement

IA	Number of schools	Number of samples requested	Number of additional samples requested	Percentage agreement with provisional marks
1	38	270	37	57.89%
2	38	271	35	76.32%
3	38	263	0	68.42%

# Internal assessment 1 (IA1)



## Examination — extended response (25%)

The examination assesses the application of a range of cognitions to a provided problem, question or hypothesis.

Student responses must be completed individually, under supervised conditions, and in a set timeframe.

## Assessment design

### Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

### Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	16
Authentication	0
Authenticity	0
Item construction	2
Scope and scale	3

\*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 38.

### Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- minimised predictability by including virtue ethics as one of the ethical theories to be analysed and evaluated, providing an alternative to the common pairing of utilitarianism and Kantian ethics
- included task instructions that clearly and succinctly informed students of the cognitions they were required to demonstrate, using cognitive verbs that aligned to the assessment objectives and ISMG descriptors.

### Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- explicitly direct students in the task instructions to use the terminology of reason as well as moral philosophy in their response
- avoid overly complex contemporary ethical issues or dilemmas. Such complexity can impede the ability of students to apply the stipulated ethical theories to the issue and evaluate their application at a level that matches descriptors in the upper performance levels of the ISMG

- include stimulus of appropriate scope and scale so that it can be effectively engaged with under the conditions of the task
- use direct quotes or passages from key philosophers as philosophical stimulus. Use of secondary sources impedes students demonstrating their own interpretations and explanations necessary to fulfil upper performance level descriptors in the Defining, using and explaining and Interpreting and analysing criteria.

## Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

### Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	3
Language	1
Layout	1
Transparency	10

\*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 38.

### Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- communicated the task clearly and succinctly in the task instructions, using the explicit language of the syllabus subject matter and ISMG, e.g. Kantian ethics rather than deontological ethics.

### Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- feature a contemporary ethical issue or dilemma that is not likely to alienate or otherwise disadvantage students. In selecting an appropriate unseen ethical issue or dilemma, schools should be mindful that students will be engaging with it under examination conditions.

### Additional advice

- Note that using a hypothetical moral dilemma as stimulus is acceptable if it has contemporary relevance.
- Limiting stimulus to only the explanation of the selected ethical issue or dilemma and the relevant philosophy extracts helps provide appropriate scope and scale to the instrument.

## Assessment decisions

### Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

### Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Defining, using and explaining	60.53%	39.47%	0%	0%
2	Interpreting and analysing	73.68%	26.32%	0%	0%
3	Organising, synthesising and evaluating	73.68%	26.32%	0%	0%
4	Creating and communicating	100%	0%	0%	0%

### Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for the Defining, using and explaining criterion
  - to demonstrate an *astute* understanding of meaning at the 7–8 mark performance level, responses went beyond a recitation of pre-learned facts about the moral philosophies and instead employed the terminology of moral philosophy and reasoning in the context of engaging with the provided ethical issue
  - basic statements of core principle/s of the selected ethical theories without further detail (e.g. elucidation of the reasons for the principles) appropriately matched ‘descriptions and explanations of concepts and principles of moral philosophy’ at the 3–4 mark performance level
- judgments recognised that to match the upper performance levels in both the Interpreting and analysing and Organising, synthesising and evaluating criteria, responses are required to show genuine engagement with the ethical issue contained in the stimulus, using the fundamentals of argument as the tools for analysis and evaluation.

### Samples of effective practices

The following excerpt illustrates an appropriate match of evidence in the Defining, using and explaining criterion requiring detailed descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to moral philosophy that are correct in all key aspects (7–8 mark level). The excerpt presents an informed description of Bentham’s utilitarianism, explaining its function as an example of moral relativism, and demonstrates insight in recognising that the principle of utility requires consideration of both actions and omissions. The explanation foreshadows the application of criteria from the hedonic calculus to various stakeholders to consider the morality of the action being inquired into.



**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

. a consequentialist -

Conversely to Kantian ethics, Utilitarianism is ~~an~~ ethical system, that ~~is~~ meaning it is concerned with the end of an action with ~~the~~ little regard to the means. ~~As such, it~~ Thus, Utilitarianism follows the principle of moral relativism, meaning ~~the~~ an action's ~~to~~ morality judgement as "right" or "wrong" depends on the context of ~~an act~~ the action, and is not universal. ~~Actions are judged by their adherence~~ ~~the application of the~~ Utilitarianism ~~to~~ measures "right" and "wrong" ~~are~~ by questioning whether an action produces happiness or prevents unhappiness (Extract 2). As such, ~~the~~ the ethical system ~~off~~ works under what is known as the "principle of utility". ~~which states that "we should always~~ Proposed by ~~Jeremy Bentham~~ Jeremy Bentham, the principle states that "we should always act so as to produce the greatest ~~number~~ happiness for the greatest number of people". Bentham ~~compares~~ evaluates moral actions by comparing ~~the~~ the produced happiness and prevented unhappiness of an action's ~~omission~~ commission or omission. Happiness is compared using the "hedonic calculus", a series of variables that affect happiness including intensity, duration, and ~~certainty~~ ~~of~~ certainty of happiness. When comparing the resulting happiness and unhappiness felt by relevant <sup>in euthanasia</sup> stakeholders, Utilitarianism concludes that ~~the~~ the ~~to~~ unhappiness ~~is~~ ~~felt~~ ~~prevented~~ of the patient that is prevented by euthanasia is more than the unhappiness felt by family and friends. This comparison is displayed in standard form below:

The following excerpt demonstrates an appropriate match of evidence in the Interpreting and analysing criterion requiring detailed and informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to moral philosophy (6–7 mark level). The response analyses (and subsequently evaluates) the difference between autonomous and heteronomous actions and their moral status according to Kant, and it uses an example to support the claim that this difference forms part of common moral intuitions.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.



Premise 2 is plausible if Kantian ethics is accepted. However, before acceptance ~~it must~~ the benefits and consequences ~~be considered in real life.~~ must be considered.

Firstly to act autonomously is to make a choice of your own accord, not because of a rule, law or tradition. This is applicable to real life as following the law simply because you must holds a different sense of morality when compared to following the law because you believe the action is wrong. If someone were to act heteronomously and not murder because of the law this would be widely accepted as amoral or immoral. Whereas if someone autonomously didn't murder because they don't want to this is considered moral. This aspect is commonly accepted in our world.

### Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- in the Defining, using and explaining criterion, close attention be paid to the appropriateness of use of the terminology of reason, which is indicative of understanding of meaning. The 5–6 mark performance level requires *generally appropriate* use and a *substantial* understanding of meaning of key reasoning terms. A response that describes a clearly invalid argument as 'valid' does not demonstrate an understanding of the meaning of the term. Similarly, to refer to a premise rather than an argument as 'valid' is an instance of inappropriate use of this term
- in the Interpreting and analysing criterion
  - to match the 6–7 mark performance level requiring *detailed* and *informed* interpretation of significant ideas and information, more than a superficial application of the utilitarian greatest happiness principle is required. Consideration of factors such as the effect of an action beyond the primary agent and/or the application of various criteria within the felicific calculus (e.g. intensity, purity) should be evident in the response. Likewise, responses must demonstrate a correct interpretation of the first formulation of Kant's categorical imperative (the 'universalisability' principle). Responses that approach the application of this principle in a purely consequentialist manner, rather than considering whether the adoption of a maxim would lead to a logical contradiction, more appropriately display interpretation of ideas and information relating to moral philosophy at the mid to lower performance levels

- to constitute an *accurate* deconstruction of relevant arguments at the 6–7 mark performance level, the premises of deconstructed arguments need to correctly represent the principle/s of the ethical theory being applied. Additionally, the structural arrangement of deconstructed arguments should correspond to the response’s assessment of the argument, e.g. arguments labelled as deductively valid should be set out in a structure that demonstrates validity
- in the Organising, synthesising and evaluating criterion
  - the term ‘argument’ in the third descriptor references the argument formulated by the student across their response. To match this descriptor at the upper performance levels, clear justification must be provided in support of the response’s central thesis. Responses that, for instance, claim as sound two arguments with contrary conclusions, yet provide limited or no justification for preferring one conclusion over the other, match the descriptor at the lower performance levels
  - a response that contains a contradiction by evaluating an argument as sound yet also claims it possesses either a false premise or fallacious reasoning demonstrates synthesis of ideas and information relating to moral philosophy at the lower performance levels
- in the Creating and communicating criterion, ‘features of the analytical essay genre’ require responses to articulate a central thesis. Responses lacking a central thesis are better matched to the mid to lower performance levels, depending on the use of other features of the analytical essay genre evidenced in the response.

### Additional advice

- Responses that are obviously scaffolded and pre-prepared tend not to demonstrate performance of the objectives as well as those that are genuinely responsive to the unseen ethical issue. A common example is when students appear determined to identify a ‘clash of duties’ when applying Kantian ethics, regardless of whether or not such a ‘clash’ was relevant to the issue.
- There is no requirement to identify an informal fallacy in every essay. Students would be advised to concentrate their efforts on not committing fallacies themselves, particularly formal fallacies when attempting argument deconstruction.
- There is no requirement for responses to use categorical logic as such logic is not stipulated subject matter in the syllabus.

# Internal assessment 2 (IA2)



## Extended response — analytical essay (25%)

This assessment focuses on the interpretation, analysis, examination and/or evaluation of ideas and information. It is an open-ended task responding to a particular situation or stimulus materials. While students may undertake some research when writing the extended response, it is not the focus of this technique.

This assessment occurs over an extended and defined period of time. Students may use class time and their own time to develop a response.

## Assessment design

### Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

### Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	10
Authentication	0
Authenticity	1
Item construction	1
Scope and scale	4

\*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 38.

### Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- contained task instructions that directed students to focus on a selected school of thought and, in determining its relevance to today's society, assess the cogency of its key claims and arguments in relation to a contextualising social issue
- chose an appropriate social issue through which to contextualise the inquiry into the claims and arguments of the selected school of thought. Examples included the relevance of existentialist philosophy to contemporary debates concerning identity politics and representations of gender, and the relevance of consequentialist thought to issues concerning the treatment of non-human animal species
- contained stimulus comprising sufficiently detailed philosophical texts (e.g. extracts from primary source articles, essays and arguments by relevant thinkers) that provided students the opportunity to demonstrate interpretation, argument deconstruction and the evaluation of claims and ideas at the mid and upper performance levels of the ISMG.

## Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- explicitly direct students in the task instructions to use the terminology of reason as well as that from the selected philosophical school of thought in their response
- provide substantial primary source philosophical text extracts as stimulus. Exclusive use of secondary sources impedes the demonstration of philosophical interpretation and explanation
- include stimulus material that contains alternative arguments and philosophical perspectives to that offered by the selected school of thought, or as between thinkers within the school of thought. This facilitates the demonstration of descriptors within the Interpreting and analysing criterion (determination of relationships) and Organising, synthesising and evaluating criterion (synthesis of ideas and information)
- contain stimulus that provides an explanation of the contextualising social issue selected.

## Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

### Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	1
Layout	0
Transparency	5

\*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 38.

## Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided a task description that was clear and unambiguous, using cues in the instructions that aligned with the cognitive verbs contained in the assessment objectives and ISMG.

## Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- keep context statements brief and concise. They should not contain information that is more appropriately placed in the stimulus.

## Additional advice

- Note that context statements within assessment instruments are optional.

## Assessment decisions

### Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

### Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Defining, using and explaining	81.58%	18.42%	0%	0%
2	Interpreting and analysing	78.95%	21.05%	0%	0%
3	Organising, synthesising and evaluating	78.95%	21.05%	0%	0%
4	Creating and communicating	100%	0%	0%	0%

### Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- schools annotated responses that did not meet syllabus specifications by exceeding the prescribed word length. These annotations indicated the policy strategy used to respond to the issue by, for example, excluding evidence beyond the required length (*QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 8.2.6).

#### Samples of effective practices

The following excerpt illustrates consistent and appropriate use of the terminology of the selected philosophical school of thought, evidencing an astute understanding of meaning (Defining, using and explaining criterion, 7–8 marks). In the context of providing a detailed explanation of the application of a philosophical concept within Stoicism (the Principle of Assent), terms relevant to Stoic thought are employed with clarity and accuracy to assist the explanation. This is further aided through the discerning use of stimulus material — the skilfully interpreted Seneca quote — and appropriate source acknowledgment.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Premise 1 asserts that impressions of events that will have negative consequences should be rejected. The *Principle of Assent* uses the application of logic to determine how the perception of an external event and the formation of a value judgement should be responded to. According to Stoic psychology, bodily sensations give rise to an internal impression or ‘*phantasia*’ of external events that is separate from the events themselves. This mental representation of the impression takes place in the ‘*hégemonikon*’, which is considered the seat of consciousness. Determining whether one should assent to or reject an impression requires an objective representation of the event; this representation is known as ‘*phantasia kataléptiké*’, which is a reliable and certain impression that accurately comprehends circumstances (Robertson, 2013).

An objective view of jealousy over others’ material possessions would state that assenting to any feelings of jealousy would only trigger concerns about self-worth and inadequacy (Consiglio, 2022), indicating the truthfulness of premise 2. This negative effect of jealousy is encapsulated in a quote from the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca, when he states:

“At last, then, away with all these treacherous goods! They look better to those who hope for them than to those who have attained them” (McAteer, 2020).

This quote from Seneca illustrates the inadequacy felt by those who have assented to their impressions of jealousy and the longing they have for the material possessions of others. As a Stoic, Seneca has no want of others’ wealth and as such is on his way to achieving *eudaimonia* through his use of ‘*phantasia kataléptiké*’. Due to this representation of jealousy through the *Principle of Assent*, it can be said that both premises 1 and 2, and by deduction sub-conclusion 1, are all true statements.

This excerpt provides one example, elaborated upon later in the response, of the determination of relevant and significant relationships within and between ideas, arguments and theories of the philosophical school of thought (Stoicism), addressing the Interpreting and analysing criterion (6–7 marks). This is demonstrated by the response explicitly contrasting the nuances of the thought of Aurelius and Epictetus relevant to the contextualising contemporary issue — how to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Marcus Aurelius, a Roman Emperor, and Stoic philosopher, shared many core principles with Epictetus but placed a greater emphasis on the importance of individual self-reflection and self-improvement. Whilst both philosophers stressed the importance of self-discipline, rationality and living in accordance with nature Aurelius saw adversity as an inevitable part of the human experience. Therefore, he believed that one should see adversity as an opportunity for personal growth and reflection and as an opportunity to strengthen one’s character and become a better person; “The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way.” (Meditations 5:20) Thus, the key contrast between Aurelius and Epictetus lies in the former’s emphasis on using adversity to grow and become a better person whilst, the latter viewed it as something one must accept with equanimity in order to achieve inner freedom and tranquility. These principles are best expressed by the below inductive standard form:



## Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- in the Defining, using and explaining criterion
  - it be understood that ‘terminology of the selected school of thought’ incorporates the terminology of reason, as stipulated in the prescribed subject matter of Unit 3 Topic 2. As the language of reasoning provides the discourse by which philosophy is undertaken, its employment should be considered when determining whether use of terminology is *consistent* and *appropriate*, demonstrating *astute* or *substantial* understanding of meaning as required at the upper performance levels
  - to demonstrate *detailed* descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the selected school of thought at the 7–8 and 5–6 mark performance levels, responses need to provide a degree of detail that goes beyond broad generalisations and include an understanding of nuance and complexity of the school of thought
- in the Interpreting and analysing criterion
  - judgments recognise that interpretation of *significant* ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought requires responses to directly engage with philosophical ideas presented in the stimulus material. Responses that interpret ideas and information related to the selected philosophical school of thought but avoid engaging with ideas in the stimulus are more appropriately matched at the 2–3 or 1-mark performance level
  - for an argument deconstruction to be *accurate* at the 6–7 mark performance level, it must correctly convey the philosophical principles under analysis, and the arrangement of the propositions comprising the argument’s premises and conclusion must correspond with the response’s assessment of the argument. For instance, an argument labelled as deductively valid should be structurally arranged to demonstrate validity. An argument deconstruction containing an error in inferential connections in its setting out may be more appropriately matched to a *considered* deconstruction at the 4–5 mark performance level, whereas a greater number of errors would be more appropriately matched to *partial* or *ineffective* deconstruction at the lower performance levels
  - the ‘*determination* of relationships within and between ideas, arguments and theories’ descriptor emphasises that responses should explicitly demonstrate how different aspects of philosophical ideas, arguments and theories relate to each other, as well as contrast to competing theories, views and concepts. Such evidence needs to be apparent in responses to satisfy this descriptor across the full range of performance levels
- in the Organising, synthesising and evaluating criterion, when making judgment as to how well theories and views relating to the selected philosophical school of thought have been evaluated, the focus of a response’s evaluation should be on the school of thought’s contestable claims and arguments. Responses that focus solely on how well the philosophy applies to the selected issue without greater evaluative engagement with the theories and views of the school of thought are better matched to this descriptor at the lower performance levels
- in the Creating and communicating criterion, it be understood that use of a recognised referencing convention forms part of the genre of an analytical essay. All sources used in the production of a response, including those provided in the stimulus material, should be appropriately acknowledged. Lack of appropriate acknowledgment precludes a response being matched at the 3-mark performance level given the need for *consistent adherence* to

genre and recognised referencing conventions and *minimal errors* in referencing. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools should also be appropriately acknowledged.

### Additional advice

- The language of reasoning contained in Unit 1, which is listed as subject matter in all subsequent philosophy units in the syllabus, should be used with discernment in responses. For instance, it is unnecessary for responses to contain references to logical fallacies or cognitive biases if such concepts are not relevant to the inquiry being undertaken. Rather, students should take care not to commit such errors of reasoning themselves in the construction of the overall argument conveyed through their essay. Likewise, responses do not need to explicitly define what terms like 'validity' mean, e.g. when declaring a deconstructed argument's inferential composition as being 'valid'. That a response demonstrates understanding of this term can be determined through the appropriate use of such terminology in context, e.g. identifying as valid an argument that, on inspection, demonstrates that the presumed truth of its premises guarantees the truth of its conclusion.
- Care should be taken in the teaching and learning that supports the IA2 assessment to avoid explicitly using material provided in the assessment stimulus to model deconstructed arguments. Such modelling constitutes an inappropriate level of scaffolding as it precludes students from demonstrating a key objective of the task for themselves.
- All of the philosophical schools of thought listed in Unit 3 Topic 2 encompass various theories, strands of thought and a variety of relevant thinkers. While IA2 stimulus packages can contain philosophical material reflecting this diversity, ISMG descriptors at the upper performance levels requiring detail, thoroughness and astuteness are more effectively demonstrated when responses focus on one or a few key theories and arguments. This allows for depth of interpretation, explanation and evaluation.



# Internal assessment 3 (IA3)



## Extended response — analytical essay (25%)

This assessment focuses on the interpretation, analysis, examination and/or evaluation of ideas and information. It is an open-ended task responding to a particular situation or stimulus materials. While students may undertake some research when writing the extended response, it is not the focus of this technique.

This assessment occurs over an extended and defined period of time. Students may use class time and their own time to develop a response.

## Assessment design

### Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

### Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	10
Authentication	0
Authenticity	3
Item construction	4
Scope and scale	8

\*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 38.

### Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- selected for inquiry a right or category of rights whose existence, source or status was able to be discussed in the context of an applicable contemporary issue, e.g. within a democracy, the legitimacy of any right providing a voice to government afforded to a particular group; the existence of a 'right to be forgotten' in the context of contemporary data retention practices
- instructed students to arrive at a justified conclusion about the existence, source or status of the selected right or category of rights
- provided stimulus on both rights-related philosophy and the contextualising issue.

## Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- explicitly direct students in the task instructions to use the terminology of reason as well as that of rights in the response
- provide substantial primary source philosophical text extracts as stimulus, e.g. articles, essays and arguments by relevant thinkers, and include contrasting philosophical views. Such stimulus provides students the opportunity to deconstruct arguments, interpret, determine relationships, and evaluate claims and ideas, thereby allowing demonstration of commensurate ISMG descriptors at the mid and upper performance levels.

## Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

### Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	1
Layout	0
Transparency	12

\*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 38.

## Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- incorporated a contemporary issue and associated stimulus that were engaging and age-appropriate
- provided task instructions that clearly indicated to students the cognitions they were required to demonstrate, using cognitive verbs that aligned to the assessment objectives and ISMG descriptors.

## Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- state the task in a manner that is precise and unambiguous, and that requires students to arrive at a justified conclusion about the existence, source or status of a selected right or category of rights
- avoid use of unnecessary jargon or other technical terms in task descriptions which may act to confuse the meaning of the task inquiry
- clearly state the task in the Task section of the instrument, rather than in the Context or Stimulus sections.

## Additional advice

- With respect to the IA3 assessment specifications, the

- *existence* of a right and the *source* of a right invite inquiries into issues such as what criteria needs to be fulfilled for an entity to be able to accrue rights, e.g. non-human animals or AI. It also covers inquiries into issues such as whether rights exist beyond those created by legal processes, i.e. so called ‘natural’ or ‘human’ rights
- *status* of rights incorporates inquiries into whether a certain right is absolute or qualified, as well as how a qualified right should be balanced against competing rights’ claims, e.g. a right to expression as against the right to live free of racial discrimination. It also incorporates inquiries as to whether a right should be construed as a positive right or a negative right, e.g. the right to life.

## Assessment decisions

### Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

### Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Defining, using and explaining	71.05%	26.32%	2.63%	0%
2	Interpreting and analysing	78.95%	21.05%	0%	0%
3	Organising, synthesising and evaluating	81.58%	18.42%	0%	0%
4	Creating and communicating	97.37%	2.63%	0%	0%

### Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- in the Interpreting and analysing criterion, judgments recognised that ‘interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to rights’ at the mid and upper performance levels was facilitated when responses actively identified and engaged with relevant philosophical ideas and debates concerning rights. Such debates included whether particular rights should be construed as absolute or qualified; how competing rights claims should be balanced in a pluralistic society; and the appropriate criteria by which to substantiate particular rights claims, e.g. rights afforded to non-human entities.

#### Samples of effective practices

The following excerpt illustrates an appropriate match of evidence in the Defining, using and explaining criterion requiring detailed descriptions and explanations of theories relating to rights that are correct in all key aspects (7–8 marks), and to the Interpreting and analysing criterion requiring detailed and informed interpretation of significant ideas relating to rights (6–7 marks). The paragraph unpacks philosopher Martha Nussbaum’s ‘capabilities approach’ insofar as it applies to the treatment of non-human animals, and contrasts it to Peter Singer’s preference

utilitarianism. With clarity and succinctness, the paragraph summarises Nussbaum’s position, stepping the reader through Nussbaum’s reasoning, with examples judiciously used to support the explanation.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Nussbaum takes issue with this. To her, suffering, and, by extension, pleasure, are not the only metric of a good life – non-human animals, much like human animals, require more than just pleasure for a good life – and thus utilitarianism is not the most just system. For example, some require social interaction, play, and mental challenges in order to be fulfilled, much like we require love and social interactions ourselves even if they cause us pain. This is exemplified when one imagines a pig, a cow or, even a human, locked up in a concrete box and fed a drug that enables it to feel immeasurable pleasure. While these beings are completely euphoric, there seems to be something missing from this life that makes it ‘good’. To Nussbaum this is extremely problematic, as, despite being completely “happy”, the being cannot flourish (Nussbaum, 2023). Flourishing for Nussbaum is the fulfilment of an animal’s life for what is relevant to a fulfilling life for that animal, rather than an all-encompassing definition for a ‘good’ life for every being (Nussbaum, 2023). What rights are needed and given to each animal varies from animal to animal depending on what is, for them, required for their flourishing. For example, social animals may need a right to live with other members of their species while other animals may not. Thus, while minimising pain and maximising pleasure is important for a “good life”, it is not most important facet to consider when determining what rights an animal deserve. Thus, the other aspects, those that create individual species’ “flourishing”, must also be considered when granting rights to enable this “good life”, rather than just pleasure and pain. Accordingly, as Singer’s utilitarian approach to animal rights awards rights based on only pleasure and pain, it would be unable to grant ‘fair’ rights to animals.

The following excerpt illustrates an appropriate match of evidence to the Organising, synthesising and evaluating criterion demonstrating a coherent synthesis of ideas and information relating to rights in which key aspects have been considered and resolved (6–7 marks), and to the Interpreting and analysing criterion requiring determination of relevant and significant relationships within and between ideas and theories on rights (6–7 marks). A key feature of philosophical reasoning is the identification of and engagement with counter-arguments, which occurs twice in the paragraph. In the first instance, skills of argument analysis are employed to effectively address a counter-assertion. (‘[T]his is a false conditional as ...’) In the second instance, Bentham’s rejection of natural rights’ claims is acknowledged, but distinguished through reliance on Rawls’ veil of ignorance thought experiment to support a ‘natural’ right to life. This line of reasoning, relying on Rawls’ ideas, is expanded upon in the essay’s subsequent paragraphs.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Concerns arise surrounding the argument's definition of a moral person, as some may argue it excludes individuals deserving of rights if they don't meet the criteria (e.g. babies lacking self-awareness). However, this is a false conditional, as the argument asserts that moral personhood warrants certain rights without implying non-persons don't deserve rights. Premise (1) relies on Thomas Aquinas' Natural Law Theory, which asserts that the world follows Natural Law systems that sustain life and acknowledges our instinct to protect naturally given 'goods', like life (Chudnow, 1994). Natural law theory effectively establishes the right to life as a genuine and valid right, as there is evidence supporting the natural and innate urge of conscious and sentient beings to choose life over death. Assuming this right comes from Natural Law is pragmatic, aligning with the notion that sentient beings inherently deserve it. Jeremy Bentham rejects natural law, arguing that "real rights...are fundamentally legal rights" (Bentham, n.d). He criticises the concept of natural rights, highlighting its reliance on metaphysical and theological assumptions, and instead emphasises that rights are human creations, established through societal laws (Bentham, n.d). Though natural law is flawed in its reliance on metaphysical origins of rights, applying the veil of ignorance justifies natural rights based on the belief that sentient, conscious, self-aware beings would choose to enter a society that guarantees the right to life.

The following excerpt illustrates an appropriate match of evidence to the Creating and communication criterion, focusing on the succinct and logical conveying of ideas and arguments related to a central thesis (3 marks). While brief, this opening paragraph posits a clear central thesis to be established over the entirety of the response. The key criterion upon which the argument will be based — chimpanzees' status as 'moral persons' — is succinctly stated. Additionally, limiting the scope of the essay's inquiry to two specific rights claims — a right to life and a right to bodily security — allows for deeper analysis and evaluation of relevant philosophical claims and arguments.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

The definition of personhood is a complex issue in social, legal, and philosophical debates. This essay will assess the extent to which any rights of personhood should be awarded to Chimpanzees. It will be argued that Chimpanzees are moral persons, and therefore, are entitled to the right to life and the right to bodily security.

### Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- in the Defining, using and explaining criterion
  - 'terminology relating to rights' incorporates the terminology of reason, as stipulated in the prescribed subject matter of Unit 4 Topic 1: Rights, given the language of reasoning provides the discourse by which philosophy is undertaken
  - the assessment of terminology is to be based on its 'use' in such a way as to demonstrate 'understanding of meaning'. Simply listing in a response key terms and concepts with definitions without otherwise meaningfully *using* such terms in the context of the essay more appropriately matches 'use of the terminology of rights is evident, but not sufficient' at the 1–2 mark performance level

- in the Interpreting and analysing criterion
  - to match the 6–7 mark performance level, an *accurate* argument deconstruction must correctly convey the philosophical principles under analysis, and the arrangement of the propositions comprising the argument’s premises and conclusion must correspond with the student’s assessment of the argument. For instance, an argument labelled as deductively valid should be structurally arranged to demonstrate validity. An argument deconstruction containing an error in inferential connections in its setting out may be more appropriately matched to a *considered* deconstruction at the 4–5 mark performance level, whereas a greater number of errors would be more appropriately matched to *partial* or *ineffective* deconstruction at the lower performance levels
  - ‘*determination* of relationships within and between ideas, arguments and theories on rights’ requires responses to explicitly demonstrate connections between ideas, arguments and theories. Responses that simply discuss different ideas without actively showing the links between them are appropriately matched to this descriptor at the lower performance levels
- in the Organising, synthesising and evaluating criterion
  - when making judgments concerning the ‘synthesis of ideas and information ... in which key aspects have been considered and resolved’ at the mid to upper performance levels, responses should explicitly identify and respond to key counter-arguments to the essay’s central thesis, given engagement with counter-arguments is a central feature of philosophical methodology
  - the ‘argument’ referenced in the third descriptor is the one formulated by the student across the entirety of their response. To match this descriptor at the upper performance levels, clear justification must be provided in support of the response’s central thesis. Responses that simply explain and evaluate the views of others without synthesising this critique to establish the essay’s central thesis do not provide a *justified argument* and hence better match the descriptor at the lower performance levels
- in the Creating and communicating criterion, it be understood that use of a recognised referencing convention forms part of the genre of an analytical essay. As such, all sources used in the production of a response, including those provided in the stimulus material, should be appropriately acknowledged. Lack of appropriate acknowledgment precludes a response being matched at the 3-mark performance level given the need for *consistent adherence* to genre and recognised referencing conventions and *minimal errors* in referencing. The use of AI tools should also be appropriately acknowledged.

### Additional advice

- Care should be taken in the teaching and learning that supports the IA3 assessment to avoid explicitly using material in the assessment stimulus to provide models of deconstructed arguments. Such modelling constitutes an inappropriate level of scaffolding as it precludes students from demonstrating a key objective of the task for themselves.
- The terminology of reason contained in Unit 1 of the syllabus, and subsequently listed as subject matter in the remaining three units, should be used with discernment in student assessment responses. For instance, it is unnecessary to include passages related to logical fallacies or cognitive biases if not directly relevant to the inquiry being undertaken. Rather, students should seek to reason towards establishing their central thesis while being mindful to avoid perpetrating such fallacies themselves. Likewise, responses do not need to explicitly define what terms such as ‘valid’ mean as an evaluative criterion. That a response demonstrates an understanding of this term, and others, can be gleaned through their use,



e.g. labelling as 'valid' an argument that, on inspection, demonstrates via its appropriate structure that its premises guarantee its conclusion.

- The Creating and communicating criterion makes reference to 'genre conventions'. In philosophy, an analytical essay is connected prose that has the purpose of establishing a claim or assertion ('central thesis'). In establishing the thesis, the emphasis is on logical rather than rhetorical persuasion, characterised by careful reasoning, the justification of claims, the avoidance of logical fallacies and charitable interpretations of counter-arguments prior to refutation. If subheadings are used in an essay, they should assist in conveying the argument being made, rather than indicating the thinking being demonstrated (e.g. by using the criteria headings of the ISMG).

# External assessment



External assessment (EA) is developed and marked by the QCAA. The external assessment for a subject is common to all schools and administered under the same conditions, at the same time, on the same day.

## Examination — extended response (25%)

### Assessment design

The assessment instrument was designed using the specifications, conditions and assessment objectives described in the summative external assessment section of the syllabus.

The examination consisted of one paper (50 marks).

The examination assessed subject matter from Unit 4. The question was derived from the context of Unit 4 Topic 2: Political philosophy.

The assessment required students to create an analytical essay response that communicated a philosophical argument justifying the preferability of one political philosophy's conception of fairness. Students were required to support their position by analysing and evaluating arguments relating to fairness in two political philosophies, which they selected from the five offered in the question.

The stimulus comprised one hypothetical scenario that posited a future in which different pricing structures determine priority of access and use of the road network. The intent of the stimulus was to elicit interpretation and evaluation of the tenets of the selected political philosophies relevant to their conception of *fairness*.

### Assessment decisions

Assessment decisions are made by markers by matching student responses to the external assessment marking guide (EAMG). The external assessment papers and the EAMG are published in the year after they are administered.

### Effective practices

Overall, students responded well when they:

- directly responded to the set question by constructing a carefully reasoned argument that established their position as to which political philosophy's conception of fairness in response to the stimulus scenario was preferable, in contrast to simply providing an exposition on the tenets of their two selected political philosophies
- provided explanations that clearly demonstrated how each political philosophy advocates for a particular conception of fairness, influenced by its understanding of concepts such as justice, equality, freedom and role of government
- used argument deconstruction as a tool for the analysis of ideas in their selected political philosophies as they applied to the stimulus scenario, and presented their deconstructions in a logically recognisable form to facilitate demonstration of inferential connections between premises and conclusions
- appropriately used philosophical terminology, including the language of reasoning, and philosophical ideas to support their interpretations, explanations and overall argument. The



use of philosophical ideas was most effective when their relevance in responding to the question was clearly demonstrated.

## Samples of effective practices

### Extended response

Effective student responses:

- used relevant terminology consistently and appropriately
- clearly explained a notion of fairness in each selected political philosophy that were plausible in all key aspects
- determined significant relationships within or between ideas and arguments connected to each political philosophy and its notion of fairness
- provided a precise deconstruction of argument/s in the political philosophy that related to the concept of fairness, accurately identifying premises and conclusion/s
- provided an insightful and justified evaluation of the tenets of each political philosophy using relevant criteria
- used all appropriate criteria in the evaluation of arguments and claims
- skilfully constructed a cogent argument on the preferability of a political philosophy in terms of its notion of fairness, using relevant philosophical ideas effectively to support this argument and demonstrating discerning use of the stimulus
- conveyed ideas and arguments in response to the question succinctly, purposefully and fluently, using the analytical essay genre, with paragraphs logically sequenced to support the central thesis.

This excerpt has been included:

- to illustrate an explanation of a notion of fairness in the selected political philosophy (libertarianism) that is plausible in all key aspects. This is contained in the first premise of the deconstructed argument, referencing 'equal opportunity in a free market'. This idea is further unpacked later in the essay, explaining the notion through use of Nozick's entitlement theory
- as it demonstrates discerning use of the stimulus by applying the libertarian notion of fairness to the road pricing scenario provided in the stimulus, synthesising the two in the argument deconstruction.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Libertarianism perceives individual liberty as paramount to all else - any infringement on the individual's right to non-interference it should be avoided. In ~~the case~~, the case of road usage, it posits that minimal interference from any form of state control is imperative, and a private market is supported to ensure individual liberty. Equal opportunity is <sup>achieved through reform is</sup> the only way to achieve fairness in society. Thus, the libertarian argument when applied to privatising road usage is as follows:

P1: A society is fair if and only if all citizens are afforded equal opportunity in a free market.

P2: Privatising road usage affords all citizens equal opportunity in a fair market.

$\therefore$  C: A society that privatises road usage is fair.

This excerpt has been included:

- to illustrate an insightful and justified evaluation of the tenets of the selected political philosophy (libertarianism). Rather than simply recall criticisms of libertarianism, the evaluation shows insightfulness as it is demonstrated through applying the political philosophy to the stimulus scenario to highlight the philosophy's shortcomings.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

This Libertarian definition of

fairness fails to consider how simply having a freedom does not grant you ~~the~~ equality or the ability to act on that freedom, and that there is at least some material component or equality that is needed in order to achieve a fair outcome. Consider a scenario in the hypothetical where a company is able to monopolise the ride share market and make road use a premium product that only the richest of societies could afford. In this scenario, leaving road use to the free market could actually remove people's ability to use roads - limiting their negative freedom - solely based on pre-determined <sup>circumstances</sup> ~~circumstances~~ like economic class. This issue of reasonableness highlights a key flaw in the libertarian approach to this hypothetical, failing to account for how using laissez-faire economics can create limitations in equality of opportunity and outcome, and thus fairness. By ~~viewing~~ viewing the market as something which will distribute resources according to the needs of supply and demand (Adam Smith's "Invisible Hand"), Libertarians are making a false assumption that fairness is thus also distributed, and as shown by the use of a counter-example, can indeed be the opposite and instead only oppress and limit the ability for ~~the~~ individuals to pursue fairness and negative freedom. Thus ~~weakening~~ <sup>weakening</sup> the ~~plausibility~~ <sup>plausibility</sup> of this argument.

This excerpt has been included:

- to illustrate the determination of a significant relationship within or between ideas and arguments connected to the selected political philosophy (communism) and its notion of fairness. In this instance, the response lucidly explains how Marx's views concerning human nature shape the communist conception of fairness
- to show the consistent and appropriate use of relevant terminology for the selected political philosophy (communism). Terms relevant to communism such as 'ideology', 'power structures', 'capitalism', 'false consciousness', 'class system', 'bourgeois', 'proletariat' and 'commodify' are used purposefully to aid the explanation provided, with their use in context demonstrating an understanding of meaning.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Comparatively, the Communist conception of fairness is rooted in their model of human nature, which is two-pronged. Karl Marx argues that the first of these features of human nature is an inherent drive to co-operate with one another, acknowledging the social aspect of the human condition. ~~Secondly~~ The second feature of ~~human~~ human nature is that it is also constructed by ideology - dominant systems of beliefs which perpetuate power structures of the ruling class - and in the context of capitalism (free market economy) convinces individuals of harmful beliefs (false consciousness) such as individuals being in competition with one another. Fairness for Communism thus includes two <sup>necessary</sup> conditions, the sharing of resources in common, and the abolishment of the class system. Applying a Communist perspective to the hypothetical scenario proposed in ~~Stimulus 1~~ Stimulus 2, the privatisation of road use ~~is~~ is illustrated to fail to uphold fairness. By privatising roads, the ruling class (bourgeoisie) would receive further oppressive power over the working classes (proletariat) right to movement, further commodifying it and restricting individuals right to fair outcomes especially materially. In a

This excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate an element in the construction of a cogent argument on the preferability of a political philosophy in terms of fairness. In this opening paragraph, the essay clearly posits a central thesis (i.e. the argument's conclusion) and provides an overview of the reasons for it, which are elaborated upon in the essay's body paragraphs. The criterion by which each selected political philosophy's notion of fairness will be evaluated — the maximisation of human flourishing — is also made explicit.

**Note:** The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

The two political philosophies which will be applied to the potential future scenario of an autonomous vehicle 'mobility market' are Communism and Libertarianism. Whilst the arguments that both philosophies would propose as responses are valid, the argument for Libertarianism is not sound, <sup>and ultimately weak</sup> whereas the argument for Communism is sound. Libertarianism would ~~propose~~ propose that the pricing structure within the autonomous vehicle market ~~is~~ is not intervened with, whereas Communism would propose that the government intervenes and abolishes such a pricing structure. Under the criteria of fairness, Communism offers ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> stronger argument whilst libertarianism ~~offers~~ <sup>offers</sup> a weak argument. ~~Therefore~~ A communist approach would be much more preferable as it would be more fair, <sup>ultimately</sup> ~~and~~ maximising human flourishing.

## Practices to strengthen

When preparing students for external assessment, it is recommended that teachers:

- advise students to respond directly to the set question, rather than provide a general critique of the two selected political philosophies. Essays were less responsive to the question when they failed to precisely explain and evaluate the notion of *fairness* advocated by their two selected philosophies, and substituted this with inquiry into other concerns such as equality or distributive justice without determining the relationship between the philosophy's understanding of these concepts and its notion of fairness
- encourage students to engage with the stimulus. Discerning use of the stimulus was demonstrated, for instance, when setting out deconstructed arguments by applying each selected political philosophy's notion of fairness to the road pricing scenario provided. Such deconstructions provided a platform for the evaluation of both the philosophy's conception of fairness and its application to the issue. In contrast, responses that listed criticisms of a political philosophy without contextualising the critique to the road pricing scenario essentially demonstrated recall (of criticisms) rather than genuine evaluation
- provide learning opportunities for students that involve the determination of relationships within or between ideas and arguments, as against simple identification of relationships. A relationship is *determined* when it is explained how one philosophical concept or idea influences another, e.g. 'The consequence of prioritising a strongly negative conception of

freedom is the inevitability of material inequality, hence the libertarian focus on equality equating to sameness of legal and political standing rather than sameness of material outcome.’ In contrast, a relationship is *identified* when the connection is named but the causal influence is not explained, e.g. ‘Libertarianism advances negative freedom and formal equality’

- impress upon students that an objective being assessed is the ability to construct an argument relating to political philosophy (Syllabus section 5.5.2). In this respect, it is insufficient for responses to conclude what advocates of their selected political philosophies would consider about an issue. Rather, questions invariably require students to justify, through careful reasoning, a position they are required to argue — in the case of the present question, which of their selected political philosophies offers a preferable conception of fairness.

### Additional advice

- Teachers are encouraged to provide students with the opportunity to practise effective essay planning. This should involve students giving themselves time to think through the question and stimulus to formulate a clear central thesis to argue. Once this has been arrived at, students are better placed to organise their line of reasoning, including argument analysis (deconstructions) and evaluations, to guide their essay construction.
- While it is important for students to use relevant philosophical terminology in their responses and explain those concepts under analysis as they are conceived by, or used in, their selected political philosophies, students are not required to provide a list of blanket definitions at the outset of their response. This approach can risk overlooking the nuanced way in which different political philosophies treat key concepts, and therefore can detract from the insightfulness and clarity of arguments offered.