

# Subject report: Endorsement

## Philosophy & Reason — 2026 cohort

This resource identifies strengths and opportunities to improve the development and submission of internal assessment instruments for Philosophy & Reason (General subject). Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, [Section 9.5](#).

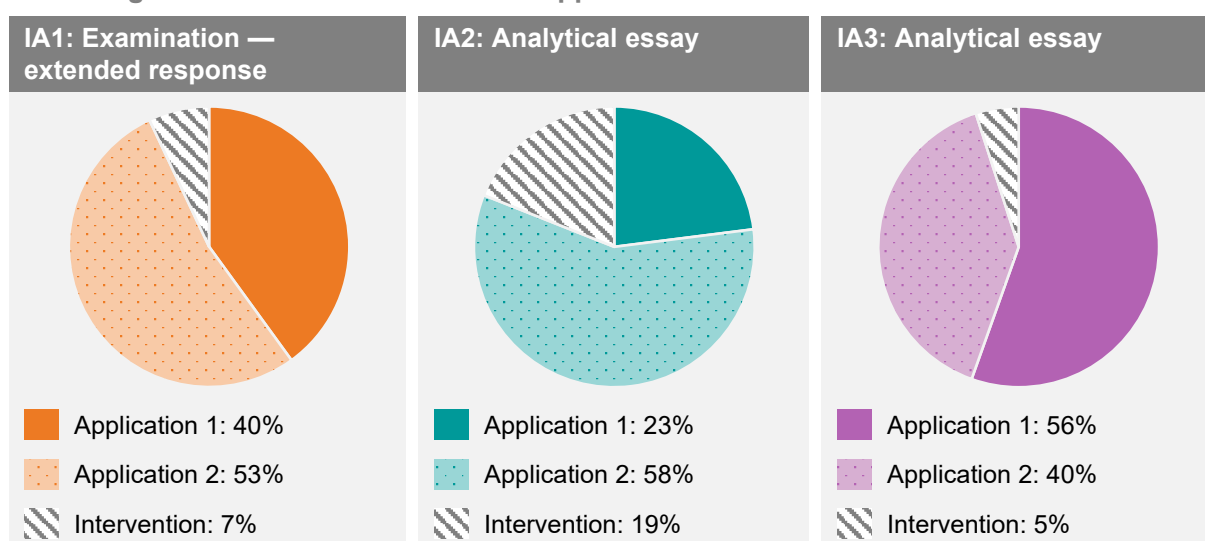
## Summary of endorsement for the 2026 cohort

### Number of internal assessment (IA) instruments submitted for endorsement

IA1	IA2	IA3
43	43	43

**Note:** Number of instruments may vary due to changes in schools offering the subject after the endorsement process started.

### Percentage of instruments endorsed at Applications 1 and 2



**Note:** Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

### Validity: Reasons for non-endorsement at Application 1 by assessment priority

IA1	IA2	IA3
Alignment: 23	Alignment: 32	Alignment: 14
Authentication: 0	Authentication: 0	Authentication: 0
Authenticity: 0	Authenticity: 2	Authenticity: 0
Item construction: 1	Item construction: 2	Item construction: 1
Scope and scale: 8	Scope and scale: 4	Scope and scale: 1

### Accessibility: Reasons for non-endorsement at Application 1 by assessment priority

IA1	IA2	IA3
Bias avoidance: 0	Bias avoidance: 1	Bias avoidance: 0
Language: 0	Language: 1	Language: 1
Layout: 0	Layout: 1	Layout: 1
Transparency: 6	Transparency: 3	Transparency: 5

**Note:** A priority may be identified more than once in the endorsement decision for an assessment instrument.

# Advice for assessment design

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. The following advice is based on the endorsement process for the 2026 completion year. In acknowledging effective practices and areas for refinement, it offers schools timely and evidence-based guidance to further develop valid and accessible assessment.

## ■ IA1: Examination — extended response (25%)

### Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when:

- the task instructions clearly identified the two ethical theories students were required to engage with (**transparency**)
- the contemporary ethical problem or dilemma in the stimulus provided a realistic opportunity for students to meaningfully apply and evaluate the selected ethical theories (**authenticity**)
- task instructions contained cues that directed students to demonstrate all cognitive objectives of the task, including the use of the terminology of reasoning/argumentation (**alignment**)
- the task conditions specified the time allowed as 15 minutes planning time and 120 minutes working time, without specifying a word limit (**alignment**).

### Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- avoiding as stimulus an ethical problem or dilemma that is conceptually too broad for students to meaningfully engage with under the conditions of the task (**scope and scale**)
- providing a quantity of stimulus that students can fully engage with in the 15 minutes planning time (**scope and scale**)
- ensuring the stimulus does not include philosophical text (**alignment**)
- ensuring task instructions are clear and do not position students to argue for a certain conclusion, nor contain information that precludes students from demonstrating the assessable objectives themselves, e.g. by providing reasoning criteria (**alignment**).

## ■ IA2: Analytical essay (25%)

### Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when:

- the chosen contextualising issue allowed students the opportunity to meaningfully apply and evaluate ideas and arguments from the selected philosophical school of thought (**item construction**)
- task instructions contained cues that directed students to demonstrate all cognitive objectives of the task, including the use of the terminology of reasoning/argumentation (**alignment**)
- stimulus material included claims, arguments, ideas and/or theories from more than one perspective (**alignment**)
- context statements and instructions did not contain material that could otherwise be produced by students themselves to demonstrate the cognitive objectives of the task, e.g. explanation of ideas, identifying appropriate reasoning criteria (**item construction**).

### Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- formulating task instructions that direct students to arrive at a conclusion about the *applicability* (rather than relevance) of claims, arguments and ideas from the selected philosophical school of thought to the chosen contextualising issue (**alignment**)
- including stimulus material of sufficient quantity from both the selected philosophical school of thought and on the chosen contextualising issue to allow students to formulate a response (**scope and scale**)
- including stimulus material from primary philosophical texts of sufficient length and complexity to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate analysis, interpretation and explanation at the upper performance levels of the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG) (**alignment**)
- avoiding as stimulus secondary source material that performs the cognitive objectives of the task, e.g. textbook interpretation and explanation of relevant philosophical ideas (**alignment**).

## ■ IA3: Analytical essay (25%)

### Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when:

- task instructions directed students to arrive at a conclusion about the existence, source or status of a specific right or category of rights (**alignment**)
- task instructions contained cues that directed students to demonstrate all cognitive objectives of the task, including the use of the terminology of reasoning/argumentation (**alignment**)
- sufficient stimulus material was included on both rights' philosophy and the chosen contemporary issue to allow students to formulate a response (**scope and scale**)
- stimulus material included claims, arguments, ideas and/or theories from more than one perspective (**alignment**).

### Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- ensuring the chosen contemporary issue is appropriate to contextualise the inquiry into the selected right or category of rights, e.g. the passage of hate-speech laws in Australia as the context for philosophical inquiry into any perceived right to expression (**alignment**)
- including stimulus material from primary philosophical texts of sufficient length and complexity to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate analysis, interpretation and explanation at the upper performance levels of the ISMG (**alignment**)
- ensuring task instructions are clear and unambiguous (**transparency**)
- framing questions as normative inquiries (e.g. To what extent ought ...) rather than simply requiring explanations (e.g. To what extent does ...) to facilitate reasoning and argument formation (**item construction**).

## Additional advice

- If an instrument is not endorsed at Application 1, consider consulting with the lead endorser before submitting the revised instrument at Application 2. These consultations are supportive and provide feedback to school communities to strengthen the endorsement process.
- When designing an instrument, consider engaging with the sample assessment instruments available in the QCAA Portal. While the preservation of academic integrity means schools cannot administer sample instruments in their entirety, language and phrasing modelled in the samples can be used, e.g. instructional cues to demonstrate the objectives of the task.
- When selecting an unseen ethical problem or dilemma for use as stimulus in IA1, be mindful that students will be engaging with the problem or dilemma under examination conditions. Avoid issues that have the potential to upset, alienate or otherwise adversely affect a student's ability to fully engage with the task.
- If an assessment instrument was created before the implementation of the Philosophy & Reason 2025 v1.3 syllabus, check and revise the instrument to ensure it aligns with the assessment specifications in the 2025 syllabus.



© State of Queensland (QCAA) 2026

**Licence:** <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> | **Copyright notice:** [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright) — lists the full terms and conditions, which specify certain exceptions to the licence. |

**Attribution:** © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2026 [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright).