

# Philosophy & Reason 2025 v1.0

General senior syllabus

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# Queensland syllabuses for senior subjects

In Queensland, a syllabus for a senior subject is an official 'map' of a senior school subject. A syllabus's function is to support schools in delivering the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system through high-quality and high-equity curriculum and assessment.

Syllabuses are based on design principles developed from independent international research about how excellence and equity are promoted in the documents teachers use to develop and enliven the curriculum.

Syllabuses for senior subjects build on student learning in the Prep to Year 10 Australian Curriculum and include General, General (Extension), Senior External Examination (SEE), Applied, Applied (Essential) and Short Course syllabuses.

More information about syllabuses for senior subjects is available at [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects) and in the 'Queensland curriculum' section of the *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook*.

Teaching, learning and assessment resources will support the implementation of a syllabus for a senior subject. More information about professional resources for senior syllabuses is available on the QCAA website and via the QCAA Portal.

# Course overview

## Rationale

Philosophy & Reason combines the discipline of philosophy with the associated methodology of critical reasoning and logic. The study of philosophy allows students to recognise the relevance of various philosophies to different political, ethical, religious and scientific positions. It also allows them to realise that decisions in these areas are the result of the acceptance of certain ideas and specific modes of reasoning. In addition, critical reasoning and logic provide knowledge, skills and understanding so students are able to engage with, examine and analyse classical and contemporary ideas and issues. The study of philosophy enables students to make rational arguments, espouse viewpoints and engage in informed discourse. In Philosophy & Reason, students learn to understand and use reasoning to develop coherent world-views and to reflect upon the nature of their own decisions as well as their responses to the views of others.

Through the study of Philosophy & Reason, students collaboratively investigate philosophical ideas that have shaped and continue to influence contemporary society. These ideas include what it means to be human, how we understand the role of reason in our individual and collective lives and how we think about and care for each other and the world around us.

Students analyse arguments from a variety of sources and contexts as they develop an understanding of what constitutes effective reasoning. They formalise arguments and choose appropriate techniques of reasoning to attempt to solve problems. The collaborative nature of philosophical inquiry is an essential component for students to understand and develop norms of effective thinking and to value and seek a range of ideas beyond their own.

A course of study in Philosophy & Reason specifically focuses on the development of transferable thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation and justification, and an appreciation of the values of inquiry such as clarity, accuracy, precision and coherence; students are thus well prepared for post-school participation in a wide range of fields. Students learn to value plurality in terms of perspectives and world-views as a necessary condition for human progress. Studying Philosophy & Reason provides students with the skills of collaboration and communication that are essential components of informed participation in the 21st century.

# Syllabus objectives

The syllabus objectives outline what students have the opportunity to learn.

## 1. Define and use terminology.

When students define and use terminology, they recognise, recall and employ subject-specific terminology in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of meaning.

## 2. Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories.

When students explain concepts, methods, principles and theories, they make them clear by giving an account of them, describing them in more detail or by revealing relevant facts. They present meaning with due regard to the order of statements in the explanation.

## 3. Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information.

When students interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information, they break them down into constituent parts and recognisable components, and determine relationships. They make meaning of ideas and information using learnt knowledge.

## 4. Organise and synthesise ideas and information to construct arguments.

When students organise and synthesise ideas and information, they select and order relevant ideas and information in a manner that reflects logical reasoning to formulate rational arguments.

## 5. Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories and views.

When students evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories and views, they make reasoned judgments about the worth of these claims and arguments using appropriate criteria.

## 6. Create responses that communicate meaning to suit purpose.

When students create responses that communicate meaning to suit purpose, they convey ideas and arguments using their understanding of philosophy and reasoning. They select and use text forms and language conventions, and use recognised conventions of referencing.

# Designing a course of study in Philosophy & Reason

Syllabuses are designed for teachers to make professional decisions to tailor curriculum and assessment design and delivery to suit their school context and the goals, aspirations and abilities of their students within the parameters of Queensland's senior phase of learning.

The syllabus is used by teachers to develop curriculum for their school context. The term *course of study* describes the unique curriculum and assessment that students engage with in each school context. A course of study is the product of a series of decisions made by a school to select, organise and contextualise subject matter, integrate complementary and important learning, and create assessment tasks in accordance with syllabus specifications.

It is encouraged that, where possible, a course of study is designed such that teaching, learning and assessment activities are integrated and enlivened in an authentic setting.

## Course structure

Philosophy & Reason is a General senior syllabus. It contains four QCAA-developed units from which schools develop their course of study.

Each unit has been developed with a notional time of 55 hours of teaching and learning, including assessment.

Students should complete Unit 1 and Unit 2 before beginning Units 3 and 4. Units 3 and 4 are studied as a pair.

More information about the requirements for administering senior syllabuses is available in the 'Queensland curriculum' section of the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#).

## Curriculum

Senior syllabuses set out only what is essential while being flexible so teachers can make curriculum decisions to suit their students, school context, resources and expertise.

Within the requirements set out in this syllabus and the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#), schools have autonomy to decide:

- how and when subject matter is delivered
- how, when and why learning experiences are developed, and the context in which learning occurs
- how opportunities are provided in the course of study for explicit and integrated teaching and learning of complementary skills.

These decisions allow teachers to develop a course of study that is rich, engaging and relevant for their students.

## Assessment

Senior syllabuses set out only what is essential while being flexible so teachers can make assessment decisions to suit their students, school context, resources and expertise.

General senior syllabuses contain assessment specifications and conditions for the assessment instruments that must be implemented with Units 3 and 4. These specifications and conditions ensure comparability, equity and validity in assessment.

Within the requirements set out in this syllabus and the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#), schools have autonomy to decide:

- specific assessment task details
- assessment contexts to suit available resources
- how the assessment task will be integrated with teaching and learning activities
- how authentic the task will be.

In Unit 1 and Unit 2, schools:

- develop at least two but no more than four assessments
- complete at least one assessment for each unit
- ensure that each unit objective is assessed at least once.

In Units 3 and 4, schools develop three assessments using the assessment specifications and conditions provided in the syllabus.

More information about assessment in senior syllabuses is available in 'The assessment system' section of the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#).

## Subject matter

Each unit contains a unit description, unit objectives and subject matter. Subject matter is the body of information, mental procedures and psychomotor procedures (see Marzano & Kendall 2007, 2008) that are necessary for students' learning and engagement with the subject.

Subject matter itself is not the specification of learning experiences but provides the basis for the design of student learning experiences.

Subject matter has a direct relationship with the unit objectives and provides statements of learning that have been constructed in a similar way to objectives.



## Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives

The QCAA is committed to reconciliation. As part of its commitment, the QCAA affirms that:

- Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first Australians, and have the oldest living cultures in human history
- Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have strong cultural traditions and speak diverse languages and dialects, other than Standard Australian English
- teaching and learning in Queensland schools should provide opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the perspectives of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- positive outcomes for Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students are supported by successfully embedding Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across planning, teaching and assessing student achievement.

Guidelines about Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and resources for teaching are available at [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives).

Where appropriate, Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives have been embedded in the subject matter.

## Complementary skills

Opportunities for the development of complementary skills have been embedded throughout subject matter. These skills, which overlap and interact with syllabus subject matter, are derived from current education, industry and community expectations and encompass the knowledge, skills, capabilities, behaviours and dispositions that will help students live and work successfully in the 21st century.

These complementary skills are:

- literacy — the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions about language and texts essential for understanding and conveying English language content
- numeracy — the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need to use mathematics in a wide range of situations, to recognise and understand the role of mathematics in the world, and to develop the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully
- 21st century skills — the attributes and skills students need to prepare them for higher education, work, and engagement in a complex and rapidly changing world. These skills include critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork, personal and social skills, and digital literacy. The explanations of associated skills are available at [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/general-subjects/21st-century-skills](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/general-subjects/21st-century-skills).

It is expected that aspects of literacy, numeracy and 21st century skills will be developed by engaging in the learning outlined in this syllabus. Teachers may choose to create additional explicit and intentional opportunities for the development of these skills as they design the course of study.

## Additional subject-specific information

Additional subject-specific information has been included to support and inform the development of a course of study.

### Values of inquiry

In Philosophy & Reason, the demonstration of reasoning — by others (e.g. philosophers), as well as by students themselves — is the primary object of study.

As students engage in inquiry throughout the course of study, they should be encouraged to continuously reflect on and assess the quality of their reasoning against the values of inquiry, including its clarity, accuracy, precision, depth, breadth, relevance, significance and coherence (see Ellerton 2015).

When examining the reasoning of others, the deconstruction of arguments is a key tool of interpretation and analysis. This involves breaking down arguments into their constituent components of premise/s and conclusion/s, including assumed premises necessary for an argument to cohere. The structured setting out of this information in *standard form* is a feature of philosophical analysis. It provides a basis for the evaluation of both the inferential quality of an argument, and the truth of its premises.

### Selection of material

To facilitate the development of students' capacity to interpret and evaluate, it is recommended students engage with primary philosophical texts, particularly in assessment contexts. Secondary sources, such as textbooks and online resources, often provide interpretation, explanation and evaluation of philosophical ideas and theories useful to support teaching and learning. However, such secondary sources should be avoided as stimulus in assessment contexts as they inhibit the ability of students to demonstrate these cognitions for themselves.

### Analytical essays in Philosophy & Reason

When creating responses in Philosophy & Reason, an analytical essay is connected prose that has the purpose of establishing a claim or assertion (central thesis) through careful reasoning. In this respect, essays present an argument. As part of this process, key concepts, arguments and assumptions are clarified, and counterarguments identified and responded to, applying the *principle of charity*. Language is used to facilitate logical rather than rhetorical persuasion. Use of the first person grammatical position is also commonplace in philosophy essays, as it promotes ownership of the reasoning being expressed. Where the views of others are used, including from stimulus sources, such references must be clearly acknowledged using a recognised referencing system.

# Reporting

General information about determining and reporting results for senior syllabuses is provided in the 'Determining and reporting results' section of the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#).

## Reporting standards

Reporting standards are summary statements that describe typical performance at each of the five levels (A–E).

<b>A</b>
<p>The student demonstrates an astute understanding of meaning through employing terminology related to philosophy and reason appropriately. Comprehensive and accurate descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories are provided.</p> <p>The student provides a detailed and perceptive interpretation of significant ideas and information, with precise and accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments. Insightful determination of relationships within or between philosophical ideas, arguments and theories is evident.</p> <p>The student demonstrates a coherent and thorough synthesis of ideas and information, with all key aspects considered and resolved. Insightful evaluation of philosophical theories and views is evident through the use of discerning criteria, with sophisticated, thoroughly justified arguments constructed.</p> <p>Communication of philosophical ideas and arguments is purposeful and fluent, with adherence to genre and language conventions.</p>
<b>B</b>
<p>The student demonstrates a substantial understanding of meaning through employing most terminology related to philosophy and reason appropriately. Comprehensive descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories are provided that are accurate in most key aspects.</p> <p>The student provides an informed interpretation of significant ideas and information, with accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments. Effective determination of relationships within or between philosophical ideas, arguments and theories is evident.</p> <p>The student demonstrates substantial synthesis of ideas and information, with most key aspects considered and resolved. Considered evaluation of philosophical theories and views is evident through the use of appropriate criteria, with effective, justified arguments constructed.</p> <p>Communication of philosophical ideas and arguments is purposeful, with few errors in genre and language conventions.</p>
<b>C</b>
<p>The student demonstrates a basic understanding of meaning through employing terminology related to philosophy and reason. Descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories are provided, but with some inaccuracies or omissions.</p> <p>The student provides an interpretation of ideas and information, with deconstruction of relevant arguments. Determination of relationships within or between philosophical ideas, arguments and theories is evident.</p> <p>The student demonstrates partial synthesis of ideas and information, with some key aspects considered and resolved. Evaluation of philosophical theories and views is evident through the use of appropriate criteria, with justified arguments constructed.</p> <p>Communication of philosophical ideas and arguments is characterised by some errors in genre and/or language conventions.</p>

## D

The student demonstrates a rudimentary understanding of meaning through employing terminology related to philosophy and reason. Descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories are provided, but with substantial inaccuracies or omissions.

The student provides a simplistic interpretation of ideas and information, with partial deconstruction of relevant arguments. Determination of relationships within or between philosophical ideas, arguments and theories is minimal.

The student demonstrates a superficial synthesis of ideas and information. Evaluation of philosophical theories and views is also superficial, with conclusions supported by simplistic justification.

Communication of philosophical ideas and arguments is characterised by frequent errors in genre and/or language conventions.

## E

The student uses some terminology related to philosophy and/or reason. Descriptions and explanations have significant inaccuracies and are missing many key aspects.

The student provides a simplistic interpretation of basic ideas and information, with ineffective deconstruction of arguments.

The student makes statements on philosophical theories, views and ideas, with justification simplistic or not evident.

Communication of philosophical ideas and arguments is characterised by frequent and significant errors in genre and language conventions.

## Determining and reporting results

### Unit 1 and Unit 2

Schools make judgments on individual assessment instruments using a method determined by the school. They may use the reporting standards or develop an instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG). Marks are not required for determining a unit result for reporting to the QCAA.

The unit assessment program comprises the assessment instrument/s designed by the school to allow the students to demonstrate the unit objectives. The unit judgment of A–E is made using reporting standards.

Schools report student results for Unit 1 and Unit 2 to the QCAA as satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U). Where appropriate, schools may also report a not rated (NR).

### Units 3 and 4

Schools mark each of the three internal assessment instruments implemented in Units 3 and 4 using ISMGs.

Schools report a provisional mark by criterion to the QCAA for each internal assessment.

Once confirmed by the QCAA, these results will be combined with the result of the external assessment developed and marked by the QCAA.

The QCAA uses these results to determine each student's subject result as a mark out of 100 and as an A–E.

# Units

## Unit 1: Fundamentals of reason

In Unit 1, learning consists of the fundamental concepts and skills of logical reasoning — the methodology of philosophy. Specifically, this refers to the nature, structure and evaluation of arguments. Students learn how to identify, deconstruct and evaluate the claims and arguments of others, and to use the skills of logical reasoning in the construction of their own arguments. To evaluate an argument is to assess a series of truth claims. This skill is therefore foundational to both the process of philosophical inquiry and our knowledge about the world.

### Unit objectives

1. Define and use the terminology of argumentation to demonstrate an understanding of meaning.
2. Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories of reasoning based on the methodology of philosophical inquiry.
3. Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information from a variety of sources and through a variety of media.
4. Organise and synthesise ideas and information for the purposes of constructing and evaluating arguments.
5. Evaluate claims and arguments from a variety of sources with reference to validity, soundness and/or strength of argument and truth of claims.
6. Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments using the fundamentals of reason.

# Subject matter

## Topic 1: Fundamentals of reason

In this topic, students examine the characteristics of deductive and inductive arguments, and the criteria for evaluating arguments and their constituent claims. Students use modern symbolic language as an effective system for the analysis and evaluation of arguments. Students identify common formal and informal fallacies of reasoning, and consider the impact of cognitive biases on effective reasoning. Students incorporate these principles in the construction of their own logical arguments.

- Define and use terminology relating to
  - the composition of argument, including argument, claim, proposition, premise, conclusion
  - the structure of argument, including deduction, induction, analogy, generalisation
  - the quality of arguments and claims, including deductively valid, deductively invalid, sound, unsound, inductively strong, inductively weak, true, false, plausible, credible
  - the purpose of argument, including explain, justify, analyse, evaluate.
- Explain
  - how arguments are structured
  - the distinction between deductive and inductive arguments
  - the distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions
  - the use of analogy and generalisation in induction
  - the limitations of deduction and induction, including David Hume's problem of induction.
- Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information in order to
  - identify the components of arguments, including premises and conclusions
  - identify hidden premises
  - classify arguments, e.g. inductive/deductive, argument type
  - translate and symbolise propositions using logical operators: negation ( $\sim$ ), conjunction ( $\&$ ), inclusive disjunction ( $\vee$ ), conditional ( $\supset$ )
  - identify valid argument structures and symbolise using logical operators, including modus ponens, modus tollens, hypothetical syllogism, disjunctive syllogism, constructive dilemma
  - identify and symbolise using logical operators the formal fallacies of affirming the consequent and denying the antecedent

- identify informal fallacies, including
  - *ad populum* (illicit appeal to popular opinion/bandwagon fallacy)
  - illicit appeal to nature
  - *tu quoque* (illicit appeal to hypocrisy)
  - *ad hominem* (abusive and circumstantial)
  - *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (false cause)
  - *ad verecundiam* (appeal to the wrong authority)
  - slippery slope
  - faulty analogy
  - *ad misericordiam* (illicit appeal to emotion)
  - gambler's fallacy
  - composition/division
  - begging the question
  - hasty generalisation
  - is-ought fallacy.
- Generate questions and theses regarding issues such as
  - the use and misuse of argument in contexts such as political discourse, advertising, scientific debate
  - the difference between justification and persuasion, and the resulting difference in the quality of argument
  - the impact of cognitive bias on reasoning, e.g. confirmation bias.
- Organise information in order to
  - arrange premises and conclusions into standard argument form
  - produce a written argument.
- Synthesise ideas and information from a range of sources such as print and digital media, film and television, and philosophical texts.
- Evaluate claims and arguments from a range of sources using appropriate criteria such as truth, validity, soundness and/or strength.
- Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments using the fundamentals of reason.

## Unit 2: Reason in philosophy

In Unit 2, students explore how the fundamentals of reason are foundational to philosophical inquiry. Through a study of arguments from two areas of philosophy, they examine in detail how the fundamentals of reason are applied in philosophical thinking.

Students complete any two topics from the three topics provided.

The learning for the unit therefore comprises two topics chosen from:

- Topic 1: Philosophy of religion
- Topic 2: Philosophy of science
- Topic 3: Philosophy of mind.

### Unit objectives

1. Define and use terminology relating to the application of reason in the context of two areas of philosophical inquiry in order to demonstrate an understanding of meaning.
2. Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories of reason in the context of two areas of philosophical inquiry.
3. Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information using the techniques of reason in the context of two areas of philosophical inquiry.
4. Organise and synthesise ideas and information to understand, engage with and construct arguments relating to two areas of philosophical inquiry.
5. Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories and views relating to two areas of philosophical inquiry.
6. Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments relating to two areas of philosophical inquiry.



## Subject matter

### Topic 1: Philosophy of religion

In this topic, students explore and demonstrate how the fundamentals of reason are used to engage with religious conceptions of god and morality. Arguments about the existence and nature of a god or gods will involve the generation of questions and theses and use of reasoning techniques.

- Define and use terminology relating to
  - religion, including religion, god, omnipotence, omniscience, benevolence, good, evil
  - the composition, structure, quality and purpose of argument, as listed in Unit 1.
- Explain the nature, composition and purpose of philosophical arguments about the existence and nature of a god or gods, including
  - ontological argument/s
  - cosmological argument/s
  - teleological argument/s
  - the problem of evil/suffering.
- Interpret and analyse philosophical arguments, ideas and information about the existence and nature of a god or gods in order to
  - identify the components of arguments, including premises and conclusions
  - identify hidden premises or assumptions
  - translate and symbolise propositions using logical operators
  - identify and distinguish between any necessary and sufficient conditions
  - classify arguments, e.g. inductive/deductive, argument type
  - identify any formal or informal fallacies
  - determine relationships within and between ideas and arguments.
- Generate questions and theses regarding issues such as the
  - nature of a god or gods
  - relationship between religion and science
  - nature of morality.
- Organise information in order to
  - arrange premises and conclusions into standard argument form
  - produce a written argument.
- Synthesise information, ideas and arguments related to philosophy of religion, including criticisms and counterarguments.
- Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in philosophical theories and views about the existence and nature of a god or gods, using appropriate criteria such as truth, validity, soundness and/or strength.
- Evaluate the role of reason in discourse about the existence and nature of a god or gods.
- Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments relating to philosophy of religion.

## Topic 2: Philosophy of science

In this topic, students will explore and demonstrate how the fundamentals of reason are used within science to create new knowledge. This includes the use of deduction through the hypothetico–deductive method (falsification) and the use of induction through the use of analogy and generalisation. Students will use this knowledge to assess the status of knowledge claims within science.

- Define and use terminology relating to
  - science, including falsification, fallibility, realism, empiricism, hypothesis, proof, cause, pseudoscience
  - the composition, structure, quality and purpose of argument, as listed in Unit 1.
- Explain
  - the use of analogy, generalisation and deduction in science
  - the nature, composition and purpose of philosophical arguments about the status of scientific knowledge, including
    - the problem of induction
    - Karl Popper’s demarcation problem and the hypothetico–deductive method.
- Interpret and analyse philosophical arguments, ideas and information about the status of scientific knowledge in order to
  - identify the components of arguments, including premises and conclusions
  - identify hidden premises or assumptions
  - identify and distinguish between any necessary and sufficient conditions
  - translate and symbolise propositions using logical operators
  - classify arguments, e.g. inductive/deductive, argument type
  - identify any formal or informal fallacies
  - determine relationships within and between ideas and arguments.
- Generate questions and theses regarding issues such as
  - the nature of knowledge
  - the relationship between scientific and religious thinking
  - public funding of pseudoscience
  - public scientific literacy/confidence in the context of fallibility.
- Organise information in order to
  - arrange premises and conclusions into standard argument form
  - produce a written argument.
- Synthesise information, ideas and arguments related to philosophy of science, including criticisms and counterarguments.
- Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in philosophical theories and views about the status of scientific knowledge, using appropriate criteria such as truth, validity, soundness and/or strength.
- Evaluate the role of reason in discourse about science and knowledge.
- Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments relating to philosophy of science.

### Topic 3: Philosophy of mind

In this topic, students explore and demonstrate how the fundamentals of reason are used within the philosophical inquiry into the nature of mind.

- Define and use terminology relating to
  - the nature of mind and consciousness, including consciousness, mind, brain, free will, dualism, physicalism, determinism, artificial intelligence (AI)
  - the composition, structure, quality and purpose of argument, as listed in Unit 1.
- Explain the nature, composition and purpose of philosophical arguments about the nature of mind and consciousness, including at least *two* of the following
  - René Descartes’s mind–body dualism
  - Frank Jackson’s epiphenomenal qualia
  - David Chalmers’s conceptualisation of the philosophical zombie
  - John Searle’s Chinese room argument.
- Interpret and analyse philosophical arguments and information about the nature of mind and consciousness in order to
  - identify the components of arguments, including premises and conclusions
  - identify hidden premises or assumptions
  - identify and distinguish between any necessary and sufficient conditions
  - translate and symbolise propositions using logical operators
  - classify arguments, e.g. inductive/deductive, argument type
  - identify any formal or informal fallacies
  - determine relationships within and between ideas and arguments.
- Generate questions and theses regarding issues such as the
  - relative value of human and non-human consciousness
  - legal and ethical ramifications of determinism.
- Organise information in order to
  - arrange premises and conclusions into standard argument form
  - produce a written argument.
- Synthesise information, ideas and arguments related to philosophy of mind, including criticisms and counterarguments.
- Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in philosophical theories and views about the nature of mind and consciousness, using appropriate criteria such as truth, validity, soundness and/or strength.
- Evaluate the role of reason in discourse about the nature of the mind and consciousness.
- Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments relating to philosophy of mind.

## Unit 3: Moral philosophy and schools of thought

In Unit 3, students investigate how moral issues can be understood and engaged with through a rational framework. They analyse and evaluate a range of ethical theories and understand their application to classical and contemporary issues. Students also undertake an in-depth study of a philosophical school of thought by exploring the relevance of its ideas, claims and arguments to modern society.

### Unit objectives

1. Define and use terminology associated with moral philosophy and a philosophical school of thought in order to demonstrate an understanding of meaning.
2. Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories of moral philosophy and a philosophical school of thought.
3. Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information relating to moral philosophy and to a philosophical school of thought.
4. Organise and synthesise ideas and information to understand, engage with and construct arguments relating to moral philosophy and a philosophical school of thought.
5. Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories and views relating to moral philosophy and to a philosophical school of thought.
6. Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments relating to moral philosophy and to a philosophical school of thought.

## Subject matter

### Topic 1: Moral philosophy

In this topic, students study philosophical theories in an attempt to understand and discuss how we should live our lives. Analysis of philosophical concepts such as rightness, duty, freedom and virtue is vital if such a discussion is to be informed, rational and convincing.

- Define and use terminology relating to
  - moral philosophy, including morality, ethics, good, evil, happiness, suffering, flourishing, duty, right, virtue, value, absolutism, relativism
  - the composition, structure, quality and purpose of argument, as listed in Unit 1.
- Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories within moral philosophy, including
  - utilitarianism
  - Kantian ethics
  - virtue ethics.
- Interpret and analyse philosophical arguments, ideas and information about the individual's obligations towards self and others in order to
  - identify the components of arguments, including premises and conclusions
  - identify any hidden premises or assumptions
  - identify and distinguish between any necessary and sufficient conditions
  - translate and symbolise propositions using logical operators
  - classify arguments, e.g. inductive/deductive, argument type
  - identify any formal or informal fallacies
  - determine relationships within and between ideas and arguments.
- Generate questions and theses regarding issues such as
  - the nature of morality
  - the relationship between individual morality and social responsibility
  - the relationship between morality and religion
  - the practical consequences of adopting a particular ethical position
  - ethical obligations towards non-humans
  - the practical application of ethical theories to contemporary issues.
- Organise information in order to
  - arrange premises and conclusions into standard argument form
  - produce a written argument.
- Synthesise information, ideas and arguments related to moral philosophy, including criticisms and counterarguments.
- Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in philosophical theories and views about the individual's obligations towards self and others, using appropriate criteria such as truth, validity, soundness and/or strength.
- Evaluate the role of reason in discourse about the individual's obligations towards self and others.
- Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments relating to moral philosophy.

## Topic 2: Philosophical schools of thought

In this topic, students study the philosophical ideas of a selected school of thought. This affords students the opportunity to conduct an in-depth exploration of concepts encountered in previous units, or to inquire into ideas not otherwise encountered in the course of study. (The philosophical school of thought selected must offer significantly different learning experiences from other philosophical topics offered by the school.)

At least *one* of the following schools of thought must be selected:

- consequentialism
- Eastern philosophy, e.g. of India, China, Japan
- empiricism
- existentialism
- feminist philosophy
- linguistic philosophy
- logical positivism
- nihilism
- pragmatism
- rationalism
- scepticism
- stoicism.

In the context of the school of thought selected from the list above, students:

- define and use terminology relating to
  - the work of the selected school of thought
  - the composition, structure, quality and purpose of argument, as listed in Unit 1
- explain concepts, methods, principles and theories associated with the selected school of thought
- interpret and analyse philosophical arguments, ideas and information associated with the selected school of thought in order to
  - identify the components of arguments, including premises and conclusions
  - identify any hidden premises or assumptions
  - identify and distinguish between any necessary and sufficient conditions
  - translate and symbolise propositions using logical operators
  - classify arguments, e.g. inductive/deductive, argument type
  - identify any formal or informal fallacies
  - determine relationships within and between ideas and arguments
- generate questions and theses regarding issues arising from the work of the selected school of thought and its relevance to contemporary society
- organise information in order to
  - arrange premises and conclusions into standard argument form
  - produce a written argument

- synthesise information, ideas and arguments related to the selected philosophical school of thought, including criticisms and counterarguments
- evaluate claims and arguments inherent in philosophical theories and views related to the selected school of thought, using appropriate criteria such as truth, validity, soundness and/or strength
- create responses that communicate ideas and arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought.

## Unit 4: Social and political philosophy

In Unit 4, students explore the nature of rights, including the potential source and scope of particular rights' claims. Building on this, students then move to inquire into the principles upon which societies can be constructed to ensure humans flourish.

### Unit objectives

1. Define and use terminology relating to social and political philosophy in order to demonstrate an understanding of meaning.
2. Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to social and political philosophy.
3. Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information relating to social and political philosophy.
4. Organise and synthesise ideas and information to understand, engage with and construct arguments relating to social and political philosophy.
5. Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories and views relating to social and political philosophy.
6. Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments relating to social and political philosophy.



## Subject matter

### Topic 1: Rights

In this topic, students explore how rights can be understood through a philosophical analysis of the concept, drawing on a range of associated social and political ideas and philosophers. Students apply this knowledge and understanding to a discussion of the contemporary articulation and application of rights.

- Define and use terminology relating to
  - the origin and nature of rights and responsibilities, including human nature, moral right, legal right, positive right, negative right, duty, obligation, civil disobedience, authority, property
  - the composition, structure, quality and purpose of argument, as listed in Unit 1.
- Explain the nature, composition and purpose of philosophical arguments about the existence/source of various rights, including
  - natural rights/human rights
  - social contract theory, e.g. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke
  - John Locke's labour theory of property
  - John Stuart Mill's harm principle
  - John Rawls's veil of ignorance.
- Interpret and analyse philosophical arguments, ideas and information about the existence of rights in order to
  - identify the components of arguments, including premises and conclusions
  - identify hidden premises or assumptions
  - translate and symbolise propositions using logical operators
  - identify and distinguish between any necessary and sufficient conditions
  - classify arguments, e.g. inductive/deductive, argument type
  - identify any formal or informal fallacies
  - determine relationships within and between ideas and arguments.
- Generate questions and theses regarding issues such as
  - whether there are natural or human rights that exist independently of law, e.g. right to disobey unjust laws
  - the appropriate criteria to assess an emerging rights' claim, e.g. personhood rights for artificial intelligence
  - the recognition of non-human rights, e.g. animal rights, environmental rights
  - how to balance competing rights' claims in a pluralistic society
  - the status of documents such as a bill of rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

- Organise information in order to
  - arrange premises and conclusions into standard argument form
  - produce a written argument.
- Synthesise information, ideas and arguments related to rights, including criticisms and counterarguments.
- Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in philosophical theories and views relating to rights, using appropriate criteria such as truth, validity, soundness and/or strength.
- Evaluate the role of reason in discourse about rights.
- Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments relating to rights.

## Topic 2: Political philosophy

In this topic, students investigate how best to arrange our collective life. This includes an analysis of political institutions, economic systems and social practices based on a philosophical understanding of ideas such as rights, obligation, fairness and justice.

- Define and use terminology relating to
  - political philosophy, including human nature, fairness, equality, equity, justice, positive and negative freedom, rights, duty, obligation, distributive justice, democracy, authority
  - the composition, structure, quality and purpose of argument, as listed in Unit 1.
- Explain the nature, composition and purpose of arguments relating to political philosophies, including
  - anarchism, e.g. Mikhail Bakunin, Murray Rothbard
  - libertarianism, e.g. John Locke, Robert Nozick
  - social liberalism, e.g. John Rawls, TH Green
  - socialism, e.g. Karl Marx, Robert Owen.
- Interpret and analyse philosophical arguments, ideas and information about political systems in order to
  - identify the components of arguments, including premises and conclusions
  - identify hidden premises or assumptions
  - translate and symbolise propositions using logical operators
  - identify and distinguish between any necessary and sufficient conditions
  - classify arguments, e.g. inductive/deductive, argument type
  - identify any formal or informal fallacies
  - determine relationships within and between ideas and arguments.

- Generate questions and theses regarding issues such as
  - the need for government and source of governmental power
  - the optimal form of government, e.g. democracy, Platonic aristocracy
  - what limits, if any, should be placed on governmental power
  - the proper balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of the collective
  - the distribution of property
  - the content of principles upon which society should be organised, e.g. freedom, equality, obligation, justice.
- Organise information in order to
  - arrange premises and conclusions into standard argument form
  - produce a written argument.
- Synthesise information, ideas and arguments related to political philosophy, including criticisms and counterarguments.
- Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in philosophical theories and views about political systems, using appropriate criteria such as truth, validity, soundness and/or strength.
- Evaluate the role of reason in discourse about political philosophy.
- Create responses that communicate ideas and arguments on political philosophy.

# Assessment

## Internal assessment 1: Examination — extended response (25%)

### Assessment objectives

1. Use terminology associated with moral philosophy and argumentation in order to demonstrate an understanding of meaning.
2. Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories by inquiring into an issue relating to moral philosophy.
3. Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information relating to moral philosophy.
4. Organise and synthesise ideas and information to understand, engage with and construct an argument relating to moral philosophy.
5. Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories and views relating to moral philosophy.
6. Create an extended written response that communicates an argument using an understanding of moral philosophy.

### Specifications

The teacher provides an examination that:

- focuses on subject matter related to Unit 3 Topic 1
- includes two of the following ethical theories: utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, or virtue ethics
- asks students to
  - respond to stimulus material containing an unseen contemporary ethical problem or dilemma by interpreting and applying two ethical theories
  - analyse and evaluate the application of the selected ethical theories in determining an outcome or resolution to the problem or dilemma
  - respond in the form of an analytical essay.

### Stimulus specifications

The teacher provides stimulus material that:

- includes information on a contemporary ethical problem or dilemma not previously examined in class
- is succinct enough to allow students sufficient time to engage with it
- has not been copied from information or texts that students have directly used in class
- may be presented in text-based formats (e.g. article excerpts, a hypothetical) and/or visual forms (e.g. cartoons, diagrams, illustrations, tables).

## Conditions

- This is an individual supervised task.
- Time allowed
  - Planning time: 15 minutes
  - Working time: 120 minutes
- Students must not bring notes into the examination.

## Mark allocation

Criterion	Assessment objectives	Marks
Using and Explaining	1, 2	7
Interpreting and Analysing	3	7
Organising, Synthesising and Evaluating	4, 5	8
Creating and Communicating	6	3
<b>Total marks:</b>		<b>25</b>

## Instrument-specific marking guide

Using and Explaining	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• astute understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology of moral philosophy</li> <li>• sustained and accurate use of terminology of argumentation</li> <li>• comprehensive and accurate descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to moral philosophy</li> </ul>	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substantial understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology of moral philosophy</li> <li>• sustained and accurate use of terminology of argumentation, with minor errors or omissions</li> <li>• comprehensive descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to moral philosophy that are accurate in most key aspects</li> </ul>	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology of moral philosophy</li> <li>• some accurate use of terminology of argumentation</li> <li>• descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to moral philosophy are evident, but with inaccuracies or omissions</li> </ul>	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rudimentary understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing some terminology of moral philosophy</li> <li>• use of terminology of argumentation is limited</li> <li>• significant inaccuracies or omissions in descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to moral philosophy are evident throughout the response.</li> </ul>	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Interpreting and Analysing	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perceptive interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to moral philosophy</li> <li>• precise and accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to moral philosophy</li> <li>• insightful determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to moral philosophy</li> </ul>	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to moral philosophy</li> <li>• accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to moral philosophy</li> <li>• effective determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to moral philosophy</li> </ul>	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpretation of ideas and information relating to moral philosophy</li> <li>• deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to moral philosophy</li> <li>• determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to moral philosophy</li> </ul>	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simplistic interpretation of ideas and information relating to moral philosophy</li> <li>• partial deconstruction of arguments relating to moral philosophy</li> <li>• minimal determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to moral philosophy.</li> </ul>	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Organising, Synthesising and Evaluating	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coherent and thorough synthesis of ideas and information relating to moral philosophy and the ethical problem/dilemma in which all key aspects have been considered and resolved</li> <li>• insightful evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views in moral philosophy using discerning criteria</li> <li>• constructs a sophisticated, thoroughly justified argument relating to moral philosophy</li> </ul>	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substantial synthesis of ideas and information relating to moral philosophy and the ethical problem/dilemma in which most key aspects have been considered and resolved</li> <li>• considered evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views in moral philosophy using appropriate criteria</li> <li>• constructs an effective and justified argument relating to moral philosophy</li> </ul>	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partial synthesis of ideas and information relating to moral philosophy and the ethical problem/dilemma in which some key aspects have been considered and resolved</li> <li>• evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views in moral philosophy using criteria</li> <li>• constructs a justified argument relating to moral philosophy</li> </ul>	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• superficial synthesis of ideas and information relating to moral philosophy and the ethical problem/dilemma</li> <li>• superficial evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views relating to moral philosophy</li> <li>• provides a conclusion relating to moral philosophy with simplistic justification.</li> </ul>	1–2
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Creating and Communicating	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conveys relevant ideas and arguments purposefully and fluently</li> <li>• consistently demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre</li> <li>• minimal errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conveys relevant ideas and arguments purposefully</li> <li>• generally demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre</li> <li>• some errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conveys ideas and/or arguments</li> <li>• sporadically demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre</li> <li>• frequent errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation impede communication of ideas and arguments.</li> </ul>	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

## Internal assessment 2: Analytical essay (25%)

Students produce an extended philosophical argument in response to a set question, incorporating the explanation, analysis and evaluation of philosophical ideas, arguments and information.

### Assessment objectives

1. Use terminology associated with a selected philosophical school of thought and argumentation in order to demonstrate an understanding of meaning.
2. Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought.
3. Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought.
4. Organise and synthesise ideas and information to understand, engage with and construct an argument relating to the philosophical school of thought.
5. Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories and views relating to the philosophical school of thought.
6. Create an extended written response that communicates an argument using an understanding of the philosophical school of thought.

### Specifications

This task requires students to:

- interpret, analyse and evaluate philosophical arguments, ideas and information relating to a school of thought selected from the list provided in Unit 3 Topic 2
- arrive at a conclusion about the applicability of claims, arguments and ideas from the philosophical school of thought to an aspect of contemporary society
- respond in the form of an analytical essay.

It is recommended that this task is designed so that students can develop a response in approximately 15 hours of class time.

### Stimulus specifications

The teacher provides stimulus material that:

- includes key philosophical texts and/or key philosophical arguments and concepts to be used
- includes claims, arguments, ideas and/or theories from more than one perspective
- includes information on the societal issue or topic selected
- may be presented in text-based formats (e.g. articles and excerpts) and/or visual forms (e.g. cartoons, diagrams, illustrations, tables)
- is sufficient to allow students to form a response.



## Conditions

- Students can develop their responses in class time and their own time.
- This is an individual task.

## Response requirements

Written: up to 2000 words

## Mark allocation

Criterion	Assessment objectives	Marks
Using and Explaining	1, 2	7
Interpreting and Analysing	3	7
Organising, Synthesising and Evaluating	4, 5	8
Creating and Communicating	6	3
<b>Total marks:</b>		25

## Instrument-specific marking guide

Using and Explaining	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• astute understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology of the philosophical school of thought</li><li>• sustained and accurate use of terminology of argumentation</li><li>• comprehensive and accurate descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought</li></ul>	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• substantial understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology of the philosophical school of thought</li><li>• sustained and accurate use of terminology of argumentation, with minor errors or omissions</li><li>• comprehensive descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought that are accurate in most key aspects</li></ul>	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• basic understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology of the philosophical school of thought</li><li>• some accurate use of terminology of argumentation</li><li>• descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought are evident, but with inaccuracies or omissions</li></ul>	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• rudimentary understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing some terminology of the philosophical school of thought</li><li>• use of terminology of argumentation is limited</li><li>• significant inaccuracies or omissions in descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought are evident throughout the response.</li></ul>	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Interpreting and Analysing	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detailed and perceptive interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> <li>• precise and accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> <li>• insightful determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to the philosophical school of thought</li> </ul>	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> <li>• accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> <li>• effective determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to the philosophical school of thought</li> </ul>	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpretation of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> <li>• deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> <li>• determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to the philosophical school of thought</li> </ul>	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simplistic interpretation of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> <li>• partial deconstruction of arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> <li>• minimal determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to the philosophical school of thought.</li> </ul>	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Organising, Synthesising and Evaluating	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coherent and thorough synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought and the selected issue/topic in which all key aspects have been considered and resolved</li> <li>insightful evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views of the philosophical school of thought using discerning criteria</li> <li>constructs a sophisticated, thoroughly justified argument relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> </ul>	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>substantial synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought and the selected issue/topic in which most key aspects have been considered and resolved</li> <li>considered evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views of the philosophical school of thought using appropriate criteria</li> <li>constructs an effective and justified argument relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> </ul>	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>partial synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought and the selected issue/topic in which some key aspects have been considered and resolved</li> <li>evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views of the philosophical school of thought using criteria</li> <li>constructs a justified argument relating to the philosophical school of thought</li> </ul>	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>superficial synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought and the selected issue/topic</li> <li>superficial evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views of the philosophical school of thought</li> <li>provides a conclusion relating to the philosophical school of thought with simplistic justification.</li> </ul>	1–2
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Creating and Communicating	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conveys relevant ideas and arguments purposefully and fluently</li> <li>consistently demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre</li> <li>minimal errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conveys relevant ideas and arguments purposefully</li> <li>generally demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre</li> <li>some errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conveys ideas and/or arguments</li> <li>sporadically demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre</li> <li>frequent errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation impede communication of ideas and arguments.</li> </ul>	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

## Internal assessment 3: Analytical essay (25%)

Students produce an extended philosophical argument in response to a set question, incorporating the explanation, analysis and evaluation of philosophical ideas, arguments and information.

### Assessment objectives

1. Use terminology relating to rights and argumentation in order to demonstrate an understanding of meaning.
2. Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to rights.
3. Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information relating to rights.
4. Organise and synthesise ideas and information to understand, engage with and construct an argument relating to rights.
5. Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories and views relating to rights.
6. Create an extended written response that communicates an argument using an understanding of rights.

### Specifications

This task requires students to:

- interpret, analyse and evaluate philosophical arguments, ideas and information relevant to one contemporary issue to which the concept of rights, as in Unit 4 Topic 1, can be applied
- arrive at a conclusion about the existence, source or status of a specific right or category of rights
- respond in the form of an analytical essay.

It is recommended that this task is designed so that students can develop a response in approximately 15 hours of class time.

### Stimulus specifications

The teacher provides stimulus material that:

- includes key philosophical texts and/or key philosophical arguments and concepts to be used
- includes claims, arguments, ideas and/or theories from more than one perspective
- includes information on the contemporary issue selected
- may be presented in text-based formats (e.g. articles and excerpts) and/or visual forms (e.g. cartoons, diagrams, illustrations, tables)
- is sufficient to allow students to form a response.

### Conditions

- Students can develop their responses in class time and their own time.
- This is an individual task.

### Response requirements

Written: up to 2000 words

## Mark allocation

Criterion	Assessment objectives	Marks
Using and Explaining	1, 2	7
Interpreting and Analysing	3	7
Organising, Synthesising and Evaluating	4, 5	8
Creating and Communicating	6	3
<b>Total marks:</b>		25

## Instrument-specific marking guide

Using and Explaining	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• astute understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology relating to rights</li> <li>• sustained and accurate use of terminology of argumentation</li> <li>• comprehensive and accurate descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to rights</li> </ul>	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substantial understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology relating to rights</li> <li>• sustained and accurate use of terminology of argumentation, with minor errors or omissions</li> <li>• comprehensive descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to rights that are accurate in most key aspects</li> </ul>	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology relating to rights</li> <li>• some accurate use of terminology of argumentation</li> <li>• descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to rights are evident, but with inaccuracies or omissions</li> </ul>	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rudimentary understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing some terminology relating to rights</li> <li>• use of terminology of argumentation is limited</li> <li>• significant inaccuracies or omissions in descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to rights are evident throughout the response.</li> </ul>	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Interpreting and Analysing	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detailed and perceptive interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to rights</li> <li>• precise and accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to rights</li> <li>• insightful determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to rights</li> </ul>	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to rights</li> <li>• accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to rights</li> <li>• effective determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to rights</li> </ul>	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpretation of ideas and information relating to rights</li> <li>• deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to rights</li> <li>• determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to rights</li> </ul>	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simplistic interpretation of ideas and information relating to rights</li> <li>• partial deconstruction of arguments relating to rights</li> <li>• minimal determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to rights.</li> </ul>	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Organising, Synthesising and Evaluating	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coherent and thorough synthesis of ideas and information relating to rights and the contemporary issue in which all key aspects have been considered and resolved</li> <li>insightful evaluation of philosophical claims, arguments, theories and views relating to rights using discerning criteria</li> <li>constructs a sophisticated, thoroughly justified argument relating to rights</li> </ul>	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>substantial synthesis of ideas and information relating to rights and the contemporary issue in which most key aspects have been considered and resolved</li> <li>considered evaluation of philosophical claims, arguments, theories and views relating to rights using appropriate criteria</li> <li>constructs an effective and justified argument relating to rights</li> </ul>	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>partial synthesis of ideas and information relating to rights and the contemporary issue in which some key aspects have been considered and resolved</li> <li>evaluation of philosophical claims, arguments, theories and views relating to rights using criteria</li> <li>constructs a justified argument relating to rights</li> </ul>	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>superficial synthesis of ideas and information relating to rights and the contemporary issue</li> <li>superficial evaluation of philosophical claims, arguments, theories and views relating to rights</li> <li>provides a conclusion relating to rights with simplistic justification.</li> </ul>	1–2
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Creating and Communicating	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conveys relevant ideas and arguments purposefully and fluently</li> <li>consistently demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre</li> <li>minimal errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conveys relevant ideas and arguments purposefully</li> <li>generally demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre</li> <li>some errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conveys ideas and/or arguments</li> <li>sporadically demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre</li> <li>frequent errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation impede communication of ideas and arguments.</li> </ul>	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

# External assessment: Examination — extended response (25%)

External assessment is developed and marked by the QCAA. The external assessment in Philosophy & Reason is common to all schools and administered under the same conditions, at the same time, on the same day.

## Assessment objectives

1. Use terminology relating to political philosophy and argumentation in order to demonstrate an understanding of meaning.
2. Explain concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to political philosophy.
3. Interpret and analyse arguments, ideas and information relating to political philosophy.
4. Organise and synthesise ideas and information to understand, engage with and construct an argument relating to political philosophy.
5. Evaluate claims and arguments inherent in theories and views relating to political philosophy.
6. Create an extended written response that communicates an argument using an understanding of political philosophy.

## Specifications

This examination:

- relates to Unit 4 Topic 2
- requires students to respond to an unseen problem, question or hypothesis using an extended response in the form of an analytical essay
- requires students to
  - analyse and evaluate two political philosophies that have been studied in Unit 4 Topic 2: Political philosophy
  - focus their analysis and evaluation on the relationship between the philosophical assumptions of each theory and its conception of the ideal society
  - use unseen stimulus materials provided with the examination paper.

## Stimulus specifications

The QCAA will provide stimulus materials that:

- reflect the subject matter within Unit 4 Topic 2
- are succinct enough to allow students sufficient time to engage with them
- are presented in text-based formats (e.g. excerpts from reference books, journals, media articles) and/or visual forms (e.g. cartoons, diagrams, graphical representations, illustrations, tables).



## Conditions

- Time allowed
  - Planning time: 15 minutes
  - Working time: 120 minutes
- Students must not bring notes into the examination.

# Glossary

The syllabus glossary is available at [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior-qce/common/snr\\_glossary\\_cognitive\\_verbs.pdf](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior-qce/common/snr_glossary_cognitive_verbs.pdf).

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## Version history

Version	Date of change	Information
1.0	January 2024	Released for familiarisation and planning (with implementation starting in 2025)

