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You can talk directly to the Philosophy subject team
E: philosophy@aqa.org.uk
T: 0161 957 3267
Important information

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at aqa.org.uk/subjects/philosophy/a-level/philosophy-2175
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification
- To order extra copies of this specification please visit our website at aqa.org.uk/subjects/philosophy/a-level/philosophy-2175

This specification complies with Ofqual’s General conditions of recognition and with GCE AS and A-level qualification criteria.

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1 Introduction

1a Why choose AQA?

We are the United Kingdom’s favourite exam board and more students get their academic qualifications from us than from any other. But why are we so popular?

We understand the different requirements of each subject by working with teachers. Our qualifications:

• help students to achieve their full potential
• are relevant for today’s challenges
• are manageable for schools and colleges
• are easy to understand by students of all levels of ability
• lead to accurate results, delivered on time
• are affordable and value for money.

We provide a wide range of support services for teachers, including:

• access to subject departments
• training for teachers, including practical teaching strategies and methods that work
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• a wide range of printed and electronic resources for teachers and students
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We are an educational charity focused on the needs of the learner. All our income is spent on improving the quality of our specifications, examinations and support services. We don’t aim to profit from education; we want you to.

If you are already a customer, we thank you for your support. If you are thinking of joining us, we look forward to working with you.

1b Why choose Philosophy?

This specification has been designed to introduce students to the key methods and concepts in philosophy through the study of four broad themes: Epistemology; Philosophy of Religion; Ethics; and Philosophy of Mind. Students will develop and refine a range of transferable skills, such as the ability to ask penetrating questions, to analyse and evaluate the arguments of others and to present their own arguments clearly and logically.

Although the specification is arranged thematically, students have access to an anthology providing them with the texts required for close study. To give all students the opportunity to engage with a full philosophical text, Descartes’ Meditations is used as the key text in both sections of the AS course and in the Philosophy of Mind section of the A2 course.
1c How do I start using this specification?

- Log on to www.aqa.org.uk to access up-to-date information on: Subjects, Professional development, Exams administration, News and policy, Help and contacts.

- **Already using existing AQA specifications?**
  
  Tell us that you intend to enter students. Then we can make sure that you receive all the material you need for the examinations. You can let us know by completing the appropriate Intention to Enter and Estimated Entry forms. We will send copies to your Exams Officer and they are also available on our website (http://web.aqa.org.uk/exams-office/entries.php)

- **Not using an AQA specification currently?**
  
  Almost all schools/colleges in England and Wales use AQA or have used AQA in the past and are approved AQA centres. A small minority are not. If your school/college is new to AQA, please contact our centre approval team at centreapproval@aqa.org.uk

1d How can I find out more?

**You can choose to find out more about this specification or the services that AQA offers in a number of ways.**

**Speak to your subject team**

You can talk directly to the Philosophy subject team about this specification either by emailing Philosophy@aqa.org.uk or by calling 0161 957 3267.

**Teacher Support**

Details of the full range of current Teacher Support and CPD courses are available on our website at http://aqa.org.uk/professional-development

There is also a link to our fast and convenient online booking system for all of our courses at http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking/

**Latest information online**

You can find out more, including the latest news, how to register to use Enhanced Results Analysis, support and downloadable resources, on our website at www.aqa.org.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AS Examinations</th>
<th>AS Award 1176</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Section A:** Epistemology  
**Section B:** Philosophy of Religion |
| 100% of AS, 50% of A-level  
3 hour written examination  
Total marks: 80  
All questions are compulsory  
Available June only |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A2 Examinations</th>
<th>A2 Award 2176</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Section A:** Ethics  
**Section B:** Philosophy of Mind |
| 50% of A-level  
3 hour written examination  
Total marks: 100  
All questions are compulsory  
Available June only |

$$\text{AS} + \text{A2} = \text{A-level}$$
3 Subject content

Introduction
The philosophy specification asks these questions:
- What can we know?
- Can the existence of God be proved?
- How do we make moral decisions?
- Are my mind and body separate?
These questions are fundamental and the material covered in the specification not only provides students with a good understanding of how these debates have, so far, been framed, but also acts as a springboard for consideration and discussion of students’ own ideas.
The range of question types at both AS and A2 ensures that students are assessed across a core of important philosophical skills. Short-tariff items assess the students’ accuracy and precision; longer-tariff items assess their ability to articulate a particular argument in a clear and concise way; and open-ended writing tasks assess their ability to construct and evaluate arguments.

Students can access the specification at a range of levels.
Students will have the opportunity to engage in detailed analysis of philosophical texts, using the Anthology as a springboard for further reading and reflection.
The Anthology contains extracts from a range of philosophical texts. Students are expected to develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of them.
3a AS: Epistemology

Perception: What are the immediate objects of perception?

Direct realism: the immediate objects of perception are mind-independent objects and their properties.

Issues, including:
- the argument from illusion
- the argument from perceptual variation (Russell’s table example)
- the argument from hallucination (the possibility of experiences that are subjectively indistinguishable from veridical perception)
- the time-lag argument.

Indirect realism: the immediate objects of perception are mind-dependent objects that are caused by and represent mind-independent objects.

Issues, including:
- it leads to scepticism about the ‘existence’ of the external world (attacking ‘realism’)
  - responses (external world is the ‘best hypothesis’ (Russell); coherence of the various senses and lack of choice over our experiences (Locke))
- it leads to scepticism about the ‘nature’ of the external world (attacking ‘representative’)
  - responses (sense data tell us of ‘relations’ between objects (Russell); the distinction between primary and secondary qualities (Locke))
- problems arising from the view that mind-dependent objects represent mind-independent objects and are caused by mind-independent objects.

Berkeley’s idealism: the immediate objects of perception (ie ordinary objects such as tables, chairs, etc) are mind-dependent objects.

Berkeley’s attack on the primary/secondary property distinction and his ‘master’ argument.

Issues, including:
- it leads to solipsism
- it does not give an adequate account of illusions and hallucinations
- it cannot secure objective space and time
- whether God can be used to play the role He does.

The definition of knowledge: What is propositional knowledge?

Terminology: distinction between acquaintance knowledge, ability knowledge and propositional knowledge (knowing ‘of’, knowing ‘how’ and knowing ‘that’).

The tripartite view: justified true belief is necessary and sufficient for propositional knowledge (S knows that p only if S is justified in believing that p, p is true and S believes that p) (necessary and sufficient conditions).

Issues: the conditions are not individually necessary:
- justification is not a necessary condition of knowledge
- truth is not a necessary condition of knowledge
- belief is not a necessary condition of knowledge.

Issues, including:
- cases of lucky true beliefs show that the justification condition should be either strengthened, added to or replaced (ie Gettier-style problems).

Responses, including:
- strengthen the justification condition: infallibilism and the requirement for an impossibility of doubt (Descartes)
- add a ‘no false lemmas’ condition (J+T+B+N)
- replace ‘justified’ with ‘reliably formed’ (R+T+B) (reliabilism)
 replace ‘justified’ with an account of epistemic virtue (V+T+B).

The origin of concepts and the nature of knowledge: where do ideas/concepts and knowledge come from?

Concept empiricism: all concepts are derived from experience (tabula rasa, impressions and ideas, simple and complex concepts).

Issues, including:

- concept innatism (rationalism): there are at least some innate concepts (Descartes’ ‘trademark’ argument, and other proposed examples such as universals, causation, infinity, numbers, etc)
- concept empiricist arguments against concept innatism: alternative explanations (no such concept or concept re-defined as based on experiences); Locke’s arguments against innatism; its reliance on the non-natural

Knowledge empiricism: all synthetic knowledge is a posteriori (Hume’s ‘fork’); all a priori knowledge is (merely) analytic.

Issues, including:

- knowledge innatism (rationalism): there is at least some innate a priori knowledge (arguments from Plato and Leibniz)
- knowledge empiricist arguments against knowledge innatism: alternative explanations (no such knowledge, in fact based on experiences or merely analytic); Locke’s arguments against innatism; its reliance on the non-natural
- intuition and deduction thesis (rationalism): we can gain synthetic a priori knowledge through intuition and deduction (Descartes on the existence of self, God and the external world)
- knowledge empiricist arguments against intuition and deduction: the failure of the deductions or the analytically true (tautological) nature of the conclusions
- arguments against knowledge empiricism: the limits of empirical knowledge (Descartes’ sceptical arguments).

Students will be required to demonstrate an understanding of, and the ability to make a reasoned evaluation of, the arguments set out in the following texts; please refer to the on-line Anthology on AQA’s website (e-AQA) for further details on these texts and/or hyperlinks.

Berkeley, G (1713), *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*

Descartes, R (1641), *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6


Hume, D (1748), *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section 2 and Section 4

Leibniz, G (1705), *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Book 1

Locke, J (1690), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 1 (esp. Chapter 2), Book 2 (esp. Chapters 1, 2, 8 and 14), Book 4 (esp. Chapter 11)

Plato, *Meno*

Russell, B (1912), *The Problems of Philosophy*, Chapters 1, 2, 3
3b AS: Philosophy of Religion

The concept of God
God as omniscient, omnipotent, supremely good, and either timeless (eternal) or within time (everlasting) and the meaning(s) of these divine attributes.

Issues with claiming that God has these attributes, either singly or in combination, including:
- the paradox of the stone
- the Euthyphro dilemma.
The compatibility, or otherwise, of the existence of an omniscient God and free human beings.

Arguments relating to the existence of God

Ontological arguments, including those formulated by:
- Anselm
- Descartes
- Leibniz
- Malcolm
- Plantinga.

Issues, including those raised by:
- Gaunilo
- Hume
- Kant.

The cosmological argument: causal and contingency arguments, including those formulated by:
- Aquinas’ Five Ways (first three)
- Descartes
- the Kalam argument.

Issues, including those raised by:
- Hume
- Russell.

The problem of evil: how to reconcile God’s omnipotence, omniscience and supreme goodness with the existence of physical/moral evil.

Responses to the issue and issues arising from those responses, including:
- the Free Will Defence (Plantinga)
- soul-making (Hick).

Religious language
- logical positivism: verification principle and verification/falsification (Ayer)
- cognitivist and non-cognitivist accounts of religious language and issues arising from them
  - the University Debate: Flew (on Wisdom’s Gods, Hare (bliks) and Mitchell (the Partisan)
  - religious statements as verifiable eschatologically (Hick).
Students will be required to demonstrate an understanding of, and the ability to make a reasoned evaluation of, the arguments set out in the following texts; please refer to the on-line Anthology on AQA's website (e-AQA) for further details on these texts and/or hyperlinks.

Anselm, *Proslogium*, Chapters II–IV
Aquinas, T *Summa Theologica*, Part 1, Question 25, Article 3
Aquinas, T *Summa Theologica*, Part 1, Question 2, Article 3
Descartes, R (1641), *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 3 and 5
Gaunilo, from the appendix to St Anselm’s *Proslogium*
Hick, J (1960), ‘Theology and verification’, *Theology Today* 17
Hume, D (1779), *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Parts II, V, VIII and IX
Hume, D (1748), *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section 11
Kant, I (1781), *Critique of Pure Reason*, Second Division (Transcendental Dialectic), Book II, Ch. 3, Section IV Of the impossibility of an ontological proof of the existence of God
Mackie, JL (1955), ‘Evil and Omnipotence’, *Mind*, 64 (254), 200–212
Mavrodes, GI (1963), ‘Some puzzles concerning omnipotence’, *The Philosophical Review*, 72, 221–223
Paley, W (1802/2008), *Natural Theology*, OUP, Chapters 1, 2 and 5
Plato, *Euthyphro*
Swinburne, RG (1968), ‘The Argument from Design’, *Philosophy*, 43 (165), 199–212
3c A2: Ethics

Ethical theories: How do we decide what it is morally right to do?

Utilitarianism: the maximisation of utility, including:
- the question of what is meant by ‘pleasure’, including Mill’s higher and lower pleasures
- how this might be calculated, including Bentham’s utility calculus
- forms of utilitarianism: act and rule utilitarianism; preference utilitarianism.

Issues, including:
- individual liberty/rights
- problems with calculation
- the possible value of certain motives (eg the desire to do good) and character of the person doing the action
- the possible moral status of particular relationships (family/friendship) we may have with others.

Kantian deontological ethics: what maxims can be universalised without contradiction, including:
- the categorical and hypothetical imperatives
- the categorical imperative – first and second formulations.

Issues, including:
- the intuition that consequences of actions determine their moral value (independent of considerations of universalisability)
- problems with application of the principle
- the possible value of certain motives (eg the desire to do good) and commitments (eg those we have to family and friends)
- clashing/competing duties.

Aristotle’s virtue ethics: the development of a good character, including:
- ‘the good’: pleasure; the function argument and eudaimonia
- the role of education/habituation in developing a moral character
- voluntary and involuntary actions and moral responsibility
- the doctrine of the mean and Aristotle’s account of vices and virtues.

Issues, including:
- can it give sufficiently clear guidance about how to act?
- clashing/competing virtues
- the possibility of circularity involved in defining virtuous acts and virtuous people in terms of each other.

Students must be able to critically apply the theories above to the following issues:
- crime and punishment
- war
- simulated killing (within computer games, plays, films, etc)
- the treatment of animals
- deception and the telling of lies.

Ethical language: What is the status of ethical language?

Cognitivism: ethical language makes claims about reality which are true or false (fact-stating)
- moral realism: ethical language makes claims about mind-independent reality that are true
  - ethical naturalism (eg utilitarianism)
  - ethical non-naturalism (eg intuitionism)
- error theory: ethical language makes claims about mind-independent reality that are false (eg Mackie’s argument from queerness).
Non-cognitivism: ethical language does not make claims about reality which are true or false (fact-stating)

- emotivism: ethical language expresses emotions (Hume and Ayer)
- prescriptivism: ethical language makes recommendations about action (Hare).

Students will be required to demonstrate an understanding of, and the ability to make a reasoned evaluation of, the arguments set out in the following texts; please refer to the on-line Anthology on AQA’s website (e-AQA) for further details on these texts and/or hyperlinks.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: Books 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10  
Kant, I (1785) *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*  
Mackie, JL (1990), 'The Argument from Queerness in Ethics’ *Inventing Right and Wrong*, Penguin  
Mill, JS (1863), *Utilitarianism*  
Moore, GE (1903), *Principia Ethica*, Cambridge University Press  
Warnock, GJ (1967) *Contemporary Moral Philosophy, New Studies In Ethics*, (Intuitionism, Emotivism, Prescriptivism) Macmillan – Chapters 1, 3 and 4
3d A2: Philosophy of Mind

The mind–body problem: What is the relationship between the mental and the physical?

**Dualism:** the mind is distinct from the physical

The **indivisibility** argument for substance dualism (Descartes)

**Issues,** including:
- the mental is divisible in some sense
- not everything thought of as physical is divisible.

The **conceivability** argument for substance dualism: the logical possibility of mental substance existing without the physical (Descartes).

**Issues,** including:
- mind without body is not conceivable
- what is conceivable may not be possible
- what is logically possible tells us nothing about reality.

The ‘**philosophical zombies**’ argument for property dualism: the logical possibility of a physical duplicate of this world but without consciousness/qualia (Chalmers).

**Issues,** including:
- a ‘zombie’ world is not conceivable
- what is conceivable is not possible
- what is logically possible tells us nothing about reality.

The ‘knowledge’/Mary argument for property dualism based on qualia (Frank Jackson).

**Qualia** as introspectively accessible subjective/phenomenal features of mental states (the properties of ‘what it is like’ to undergo the mental state in question) – for many qualia would be defined as the intrinsic/non-representational properties of mental states.

**Issues,** including:
- Mary gains no new propositional knowledge (but gains acquaintance knowledge or ability knowledge)
- all physical knowledge would include knowledge of qualia
- there is more than one way of knowing the same physical fact
- qualia (as defined) do not exist and so Mary gains no propositional knowledge.

The **issues** of causal interaction for versions of dualism:
- the problems facing interactionist dualism, including conceptual and empirical causation issues
- the problems facing epiphenomenalist dualism, including the causal redundancy of the mental, the argument from introspection and issues relating to free will and responsibility.

The problem of other minds for dualism:
- some forms of dualism make it impossible to know other minds
- threat of solipsism.
  - Response: the argument from analogy (eg Mill).

**Materialism:** the mind is not ontologically distinct from the physical.

**Logical/analytical behaviourism:** all statements about mental states can be analytically reduced without loss of meaning to statements about behaviour (an ‘analytic’ reduction).

**Issues,** including:
- dualist arguments (above)
- issues defining mental states satisfactorily (circularity and the multiple realisability of mental states in behaviour)
- the conceivability of mental states without associated behaviour (Putnam’s super-Spartans)
• the asymmetry between self-knowledge and knowledge of other people’s mental states.

Mind–brain type identity theory: all mental states are identical to brain states (‘ontological’ reduction) although ‘mental state’ and ‘brain state’ are not synonymous (so not an ‘analytic’ reduction).

Issues, including:
• dualist arguments (above)
• issues with providing the type identities (the multiple realisability of mental states)
• the location problem: brain states have precise spatial locations which thoughts lack.

Functionalism: all mental states can be reduced to functional roles which can be multiply realised.

Issues, including:
• the possibility of a functional duplicate with different qualia (inverted qualia)
• the possibility of a functional duplicate with no qualia (Block’s ‘Chinese mind’)
• the ‘knowledge’/Mary argument can be applied to functional facts (no amount of facts about function suffices to explain qualia).

Eliminative materialism: some or all mental states do not exist (folk-psychology is false or at least radically misleading).

Issues, including:
• the intuitive certainty of the existence of my mind takes priority over other considerations
• folk-psychology has good predictive and explanatory power
• the articulation of eliminative materialism as a theory is self-refuting.

Students will be required to demonstrate an understanding of, and the ability to make a reasoned evaluation of, the arguments set out in the following texts; please refer to the on-line Anthology on AQA’s website (e-AQA) for further details on these texts and/or hyperlinks.

Letter from Princess of Bohemia to Descartes in May 1643

Block, N (1980), ‘Troubles with functionalism’ in Readings in Philosophy of Psychology, Volume 1, Harvard University Press, 275–278 – section 1.2


Churchland, PM (1981), ‘Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes’, Journal of Philosophy 78, 67–90 (Section 2 Why folk psychology might (really) be false)

Descartes, R (1641), Meditations on First Philosophy, 6 (expressed without reference to God)


4 Scheme of assessment

4a Aims and learning outcomes

AS and A-level courses based on this specification should encourage students to:

• develop and refine a range of transferable skills, such as the ability to ask penetrating questions, to analyse and evaluate the arguments of others and to present their own arguments clearly and logically

• consider the ways in which philosophers have engaged with important philosophical issues and approaches to problems

• refine their writing skills, demonstrating the ability to be concise, precise and accurate.

4b Assessment Objectives (AOs)

The assessment units will assess the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills set out in Section 3 (Subject content).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AO1 Demonstrate understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO2 Analyse and evaluate philosophical argument to form reasoned judgements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Weighting of Assessment Objectives for AS

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives at AS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Objective</th>
<th>Overall weighting of AOs (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AO1</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO2</td>
<td>20</td>
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</table>

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for A-level

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives at AS and A2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Objective for A-level</th>
<th>Unit Weighting (%)</th>
<th>Overall weighting of AOs (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

In GCE specifications which require students to produce written material in English, students must:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear
- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complex subject matter
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

In this specification, QWC will be assessed in all units by means of AO2. For AS, QWC will be assessed in the 15-mark questions. For A2, QWC will be assessed in the 25-mark questions.
4c National criteria

This specification complies with:
- the Code of Practice
- the GCE AS and A-level Qualification Criteria

4d Previous learning requirements

There are no prior learning requirements. Any requirements set for entry to a course following this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

4e Synoptic assessment and Stretch and Challenge

Philosophy is not primarily a body of knowledge, but an activity. In studying philosophy, we are seeking an understanding of ourselves and of the world in which we live. We do philosophy by studying the arguments of the philosophers and, in so doing, learn to construct our own arguments. Philosophers use a toolkit of concepts, arguments and methods, which can be applied across a wide range of topics, both philosophical and non-philosophical. It is the development, refinement and deployment of this toolkit which makes philosophy synoptic.

At AS, students are introduced to the key concepts, arguments and methods of philosophy and apply them across two topic areas: **Epistemology and Philosophy of Religion**.

At A2, the key concepts, arguments and methods are deployed, refined and augmented in two new topic areas: **Ethics** and **Philosophy of Mind**. The particular approaches taken by the main philosophical schools – rationalism and empiricism – are rehearsed throughout the subject content, as are overarching philosophical questions around meaning and truth.

At A2, students are expected to have a deeper critical awareness and to be able to engage in more sophisticated discussions. These are reflected in the increased demand of both the A2 question papers and the mark schemes.

Students are required to engage in sustained textual analysis. *Descartes’ Meditations* is the key text which runs through the course, being required specifically in Epistemology, Philosophy of Religion and Philosophy of Mind. An on-line anthology will be provided, containing extracts from a range of philosophical texts. For texts for which copyright cannot be obtained, the anthology will include hyperlinks or academic references for relevant sources of these materials. Students are expected to develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of these texts.
4f Access to assessment for disabled students

AS/A-levels often require assessment of a broader range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare students for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses. The revised AS/A-level qualification and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled students. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students in order to enable them to access the assessments. For this reason, very few students will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment. Students who are still unable to access a significant part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award. They would be given a grade on the parts of the assessment that they have taken and there would be an indication on their certificate that not all the competences had been addressed. This will be kept under review and may be amended in the future.
5 Administration

5a Availability of assessment units and certification

Examinations and certification for this specification are available as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>A2</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

5b Entries

Please refer to the current version of Entry Procedures and Codes for up-to-date entry procedures. You should use the following entry codes for the units and for certification.

AS – Epistemology and Philosophy of Religion (PHLS1)
A2 – Ethics and Philosophy of Mind (PHLS2)
AS certification – (1176)
A2 certification – (2176)

5c Private students

This specification is available to private students. As we will no longer be providing supplementary guidance in hard copy, see our website for guidance and information on taking exams and assessments as a private student. http://www.aqa.org.uk/student-support/private-candidates
5d Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration

We have taken note of the equality and discrimination legislation and the interests of minority groups in developing and administering this specification.

We follow the guidelines in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document: Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications. This is published on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk) or you can follow the link from our website (www.aqa.org.uk).

Access arrangements
We can arrange for students with special needs to access an assessment. These arrangements must be made before the examination.

Reasonable adjustments
An access arrangement which meets the needs of a particular disabled student would be a reasonable adjustment for that student. The Disability Discrimination Act requires us to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage affecting a disabled student.

Special consideration
We can give special consideration to students who have had a temporary illness, injury or serious problem, such as death of a relative, at the time of the examination. We do this only after the examination.

The Examinations Officer at the school/college should apply on-line for access arrangements and special consideration by following the e-AQA link from our website (www.aqa.org.uk)

5e Examination language

We will provide units for this specification only in English.

5f Qualification titles

The qualification based on this specification is:

- AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Philosophy, and
- AQA Advanced Level GCE in Philosophy
5g Awarding grades and reporting results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A*, students will need to achieve a grade A on the full A-level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of the A2 units.

For AS and A-level, students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

5h Re-sits and shelf-life of unit results

Unit results remain available to count towards certification, whether or not they have already been used, as long as the specification is still valid.

The availability of units is given in Section 5a. Students may re-sit a unit any number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result for each unit will count towards the final qualification.

Students who wish to repeat a qualification may do so by re-taking one or more units.

The appropriate subject award entry, as well as the unit entry/entries, must be submitted in order to be awarded a new subject grade.

Students will be graded on the basis of the work submitted for assessment.
Appendices

A Grade descriptions

These performance descriptions show the level of attainment characteristic of the grade boundaries at A-level. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at the A/B and E/U boundaries at AS and A2. The descriptions should be considered in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend on how well the student has met the assessment objectives (see Section 4). If a student has performed less well in some areas, this may be balanced by better performances in others.
## AS performance descriptions for Philosophy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Objectives</th>
<th>Assessment Objective 1</th>
<th>Assessment Objective 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1</td>
<td>Demonstrate understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy</td>
<td>Analyse and evaluate philosophical argument to form reasoned judgements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A/B boundary performance descriptions

**Students characteristically:**
- demonstrate a detailed understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy identified in the specification.
- explain fully, clearly and precisely, making logical links between clear points.
- articulate their understanding with precision and with minimal redundancy, using appropriate technical philosophical language.

### E/U boundary performance descriptions

**Students characteristically:**
- demonstrate a basic understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy, as identified in the specification.
- give explanations in which the substantive content is largely correct, but where logical linking may be lacking and the explanation as a whole is less than full or imprecise.
- articulate their understanding with limited precision and accuracy, making some attempt to use philosophical language.
# A2 performance descriptions for Philosophy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Objectives</th>
<th>Assessment Objective 1: Demonstrate understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy</th>
<th>Assessment Objective 2: Analyse and evaluate philosophical argument to form reasoned judgements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **A/B boundary performance descriptions** | Students characteristically:  
- demonstrate a full, detailed understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy identified in the specification.  
- explain fully, clearly and precisely, making logical links between precisely identified points.  
- articulate their understanding with precision and with little or no redundancy, using appropriate technical philosophical language. | Students characteristically:  
- argue in a clear, integrated and logical form, demonstrating clear and sustained intent.  
- select and deploy sufficient material to answer the question fully, selecting judiciously and demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the arguments employed.  
- argue to conclusions based on a balancing of arguments, with appropriate weight given to each argument and the argument overall.  
- distinguish between crucial and less crucial arguments, where appropriate. |
| **E/U boundary performance descriptions** | Students characteristically:  
- demonstrate a clear, but limited understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy, as identified in the specification.  
- give explanations in which the substantive content is correct, but where logical linking may be limited/lacking and the explanation as a whole is less than full or imprecise.  
- articulate their understanding with limited precision and some inaccuracy, making an attempt to use philosophical language. | Students characteristically:  
- demonstrate some evidence of intent, but in an argument which has limitations, or is unduly focused on a particular perspective.  
- select and deploy relevant material, although not consistently across the argument. There might be some irrelevance/redundancy.  
- make some judgements, although not all clearly based on the evidence and without clear weighting of the argument(s) or distinction between the crucial/less crucial arguments. |
B Spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, sustainable development, economic and cultural issues, and health and safety considerations

We have taken great care to make sure that any wider issues, including those relevant to the education of students at Key Stage 4, have been taken into account when preparing this specification. They will form part of the assessment requirements where they are relevant to the specific content of the specification and have been identified in Section 3: Subject Content.

Environmental Education
We have taken the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report ‘Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education’ 1993 into account when preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Avoiding bias
We have taken great care to avoid bias of any kind when preparing this specification and specimen units.

European Dimension
We have taken the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community into account when preparing this specification and associated specimen units.
C Overlaps with other qualifications

There is a limited overlap with the AQA GCE AS and A-level Religious Studies specification, although there is a significant difference in approach.
D Functional Skills

Key Skills qualifications have been phased out and replaced by Functional Skills qualifications in English, Mathematics and ICT from September 2010.