

varying number of candidates who attempted these questions (ranging from 20 to 80).

Advice for candidates

Section One

- Read each question twice before you answer it.
- It is important to always check your work thoroughly and check to make sure you have answered all of the questions.
- A clear understanding of the meaning (truth conditions, as in, what makes the statement true or false) of the connectives (if/then, and, or etc.) is important. This includes a grasp of how the conditional is used to express necessary and sufficient conditions.
- A clear understanding of the difference between the concepts of argument evaluation is crucial.

Section Two

- Many candidates are structuring their response strictly according to the marking key. This is a workable strategy, but can lead to a repetitive response that is not as succinct as it might be.
- Be very careful not to write too much and thus compromise your performance elsewhere in the examination (typically Section Three).
- Succinct analyses are far better than lengthy descriptions.
- Lists of statements (premises and conclusion) are encouraged but should not be a rewording of the passage verbatim. Instead you are required to paraphrase the argument in the passage into a list of statements that is a succinct and accurate representation of the argument in the passage.
- Candidates must evaluate cogency correctly and use the technical language appropriately and accurately:
 - statements can be either premises, sub-conclusions or conclusions, but not more than one. Premises are those assertions in an argument that are assumed, whereas conclusions and sub-conclusions are the product of a set of one or more premises. These must not be confused
 - premises and conclusions can only be true or false, acceptable or not acceptable they cannot be valid/invalid, cogent/not cogent as these terms can only refer to arguments (i.e. to the relationships between premises and conclusions, not to the premises and conclusions themselves)
 - cogency refers to the whole argument and is the sum product of premise acceptability and inferential strength (i.e. nil, weak, moderate, strong or deductively valid). Using the disciplinary terminology correctly is essential.
- Avoid lengthy and verbatim descriptive recounts of the argument in the passage.
- You should only diagram an argument if you feel certain that doing so will help to clarify your analysis. Just providing a diagram for the sake of it, is definitely not encouraged.
- Candidates must understand that a diagram of an argument is a step in the process of clarification and is not assessed as part of a candidate's skills in evaluation.

Section Three

- Inadequate time management contributes to poor performance and there appears to be a pattern of poor performance where too much time and effort is put into Section Two, and little time is left for Section Three.
- Candidates are strongly urged to allow for the suggested working time of 50 minutes, and to plan before committing pen to paper. This will alleviate the tendency to drift away from questions or to interpret only half of a question.
- You need to read the question carefully and engage with the actual question. The practice of just writing down your knowledge of the topic will not gain full marks. You must answer the question as stated.

Advice for teachers

- As per advice to candidates.
- It seems clear that there is a difference in knowledge among teachers with regard to the skills and understandings in Critical reasoning. It is essential that teachers ensure their understanding of the meanings of the various connectives, and the basic terms and concepts of critical thinking are thorough and exhaustive.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Critical reasoning (30 Marks)

Attempted by 196 candidates Mean 21.54(/30) Max 30.00 Min 10.00
Candidates demonstrated a range of ability in Section One. There were some questions that candidates did not perform as well on and they will be discussed individually. Question 2(b) did not function as intended, and so did not test properly the candidates' understanding of the inclusive disjunction.

Section Two: Philosophical analysis and evaluation (40 Marks)

Questions 10 and 11 form Section Two and 194 candidates addressed Question 10 and 193 candidates Question 11. Written responses of about three pages in length that were succinct and precise in clarification and evaluation were evaluated positively. Lists of statements to clarify the argument are encouraged but statements ought to be paraphrased accurately and succinctly. Verbatim lists of sentences were not rewarded, nor were lengthy lists of statements.

Section Three: Construction of argument (30 Marks)

Attempted by 194 candidates Mean 17.03(/30) Max 29.00 Min 3.50
The usual time management problem was evident with candidates hastily producing an argument that has merit but lacks structure and clarity of expression. There was also a common tendency for candidates to provide a diagram of their argument as part of their essay. Most philosophical arguments made in this section will be conductive arguments, that is, they will be arguments where a number of considerations in favour of the conclusion will be put forward (i.e. a number of convergent premises) and where at least one counter consideration will be discussed. Providing a diagram will not add anything to the clarity of such an argument, in the case where a candidate had written a clear, concise introduction which set out their conclusion and stated explicitly how they intended to argue for it. A diagram in this context seems gratuitous, unnecessary and an interruption to the progress of the argument. That said, in a situation where the structure or form of the argument was crucial to the support for the conclusion (i.e. the argument being given was formally valid, for instance an argument of the form *modus ponens*) a diagram might be helpful. But this would be rare and hard to do well.

Candidates should focus on giving well supported reasons for their conclusions, for instance using relevant examples or counter-examples, to plan and structure a systematic and well supported argument. If their examples come from the philosophical tradition (e.g. thinkers and ideas) then candidates are expected to refer to philosophers and their ideas in a way that shows an understanding of the relevance, rather than doing so simply to display knowledge.