Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for question 1 or 2 of this course assessment component.

Candidate 1

Section 1 — knowledge and doubt – question 1

The candidate was awarded **15 marks.**

This is because the candidate shows knowledge and understanding of some key aspects of Descartes' text, such as his aims and method of doubt, as well as the basics of his arguments for doubting his knowledge. They get this mostly correct but are not completely accurate in their description of all three arguments in meditation 1. They describe the mistrust of the senses and the dreaming argument but get the conclusion of the dreaming argument wrong. Their discussion of the deceiving god and evil demon shows some considerable confusion. Their descriptions also lack depth and detail.

The candidate provides some relevant points of evaluation, although these are superficial and would not stand up to scrutiny against Descartes' philosophy. For example, the point about Hobbes' criticism of the dream argument does not make sense in relation to the argument and the discussion of God's characteristics and whether he could be a source of deception is not relevant to this argument.

Candidate 2

Section 1 — knowledge and doubt – question 1

The candidate was awarded **30 marks.**

This is because the candidate provides an excellent response to this question. Their answer is detailed, clear and accurate. It shows in depth understanding of Descartes' aims and method. Their discussion of Descartes' arguments shows knowledge of the fine detail of the text and the implications for Descartes' faith in his knowledge claims.

This candidate provides a thorough evaluation of several aspects of Descartes' reasoning. They present appropriate criticisms of each argument in detail while fully engaging with the question. Their discussion of criticisms shows a conversational critique of the issues raised. This is done exceptionally well throughout the essay. An example of this, is their discussion of the mistrust of the senses when the candidate considers the possibility that Descartes is wrong that the senses have truly deceived him.

They discuss whether the correction of the sense deception comes from the senses themselves or reason alone, which is itself sophisticated. In addition, they show understanding of the overall purpose of Descartes' reasoning when they conclude that it is enough for Descartes at this stage to justify his withholding his assent from them. In this, and through the course of their essay the candidate shows clear, well-supported personal conclusions that are fully consistent with their description and evaluation.

Candidate 3

Section 1 — knowledge and doubt – question 2

The candidate was awarded **18 marks.**

This is because the candidate provides relevant, mainly accurate and detailed description of the content of Hume's section 2. They give a clear explanation of the distinction between impressions and ideas. They explain one of Hume's two arguments for the copy principle. They give a detailed explanation of the argument that the absence of an impression would lead to an absence of the idea and describe the use of the imagination in Hume's theory but fail to connect this to Hume's claim that all ideas are based on impressions.

They provide description of the missing shade of blue and why it may be problematic for Hume. They do not, however, pick out some of the more nuanced aspects of this position, such as the fact a colour is a simple idea for Hume and thus requires a corresponding impression for its creation which a more sophisticated answer might identify.

They give several well-explained evaluative comments, while addressing the question. The critical comments are relevant and appropriate but fail to consider some of the responses that Hume might have provided, such as the fact that hallucinations may be ideas that are more forceful or lively but that these are covered by the exceptions Hume stated in the text, ie 'when the mind is out of order because of disease or madness'.

Candidate 4

Section 1 — knowledge and doubt – question 2

The candidate was awarded **23 marks.**

This is because they have described the relevant textual content in detail. They accurately explain Hume's theory of perception as set out in the Enquiry Section II, examining what Hume means by terms such as 'force and liveliness'. They refer to both arguments in this section of the text and show how they support Hume's position as an empiricist.

The candidate explains clearly the role of the imagination and shows an understanding of the distinction between simple and complex ideas.

They explain several relevant and appropriate criticisms of the theory in detail and depth, while also engaging with the question. The discussion of Beethoven as an example of a deaf person who may nonetheless have had an idea of sounds works very well and shows a good grasp of the nuance of this criticism.

The discussion of those with PTSD in relation to the force and liveliness of impressions and ideas is also very good, though this could be better presented.

There is a clear line of reasoning through their essay and their conclusion is well supported by their discussion.

Candidate 5

Section 2 — moral philosophy – question 3

The candidate was awarded **18 marks.**

This is because the candidate provides a considerable amount of relevant, mainly accurate and detailed descriptive information in relation to Kant's theory. They competently explain some key features of Kantian ethics. They explain the idea of duty and its application in morality, as opposed to consequentialism. They clearly address the question and manage to apply Kant's theory somewhat appropriately to the scenario provided. They correctly recognise that it would involve killing and thus would go against a perfect duty for Kant. However, their discussion of the motive having a good will shows some misunderstanding of this aspect of Kantian Ethics.

They show a grasp of the core elements of Kantian ethics and have applied them well to the scenario. There is some appropriate and well-explained evaluation particularly regarding Kantian ethics being somewhat inhuman and emotionless and they draw a personal conclusion that is consistent with their prior discussion.

Candidate 6

Section 2 — moral philosophy – question 4

The candidate was awarded **11 marks.**

This is because the candidate shows a grasp of the basic principles of Kantian Ethics. They describe the focus on duty and the sovereignty of reason. They describe the distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives with some inaccuracies and give a very superficial explanation of the two formulations of the Categorical Imperatives.

There are limited evaluative comments. These are somewhat relevant but lack depth and tend to highlight a lack of understanding as to how Kantian Ethics works in practice.

Candidate 7

Section 2 — moral philosophy – question 4

The candidate was awarded **23 marks.**

This is because the candidate provides relevant, accurate and detailed descriptive information in relation to Kantian Ethics that clearly addresses the question. They explain the main features of Kantianism, analyse and discuss Kant's theory in relation to the quotation.

The explanation of the theory shows a clear knowledge of the principles of Kantian Ethics and how it should be used to help make moral decisions and addresses competently the question asked. There is a strong understanding of the motivation for Kantian thinking and the candidate explains well the motivation for the 2nd formulation of the Categorical Imperative recognising that Kant thought the intrinsic value of humanity came from our ability to reason.

The candidate provides some fair and relevant points of evaluation through the course of their discussion. The criticism with regards Kant forcing people into a 'battle between reason and emotion' is well presented and their highlighting of the strengths of the theory is also expressed competently. There is a bit of confusion in the application of the first formulation around charity and the poor which lowers its overall quality. A candidate gaining a top mark in this essay would engage more fully with the evaluative comments and these would form more of a discussion than presented here.

Candidate 8

Section 1 — arguments in action

Question 1
The candidate was awarded **2 marks** for correctly identifying premises and conclusions as defining features of an argument.

Question 2
The candidate was awarded **2 marks** for correctly presenting the premises and conclusion in standard form.

Question 3(a)
The candidate was awarded **0 marks.**

Question 3 (b)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 4

The candidate was awarded **2 marks**. 1 mark identifying the argument diagram as convergent and 1 mark recognising that the premises do not support the conclusion on their own but work together.

Question 5

The candidate was awarded **0 marks**.

Question 6 (a)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 6 (b)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark.**

Question 7 (a)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 7 (b)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark** for the explanation that the argument must be deductive because the arguer is trying to provide absolute proof to a conclusion.

Question 8

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 9 (a)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark** for correctly explaining what makes an argument valid.

Question 9 (b)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark** for giving a correct explanation of the ambiguity.

Question 9 (c)

The candidate was awarded **0 marks** because they explained how the ambiguity occurred in the argument but not how it affected the validity of the argument.

Question 10 (a)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark** for correctly describing an analogical argument.

Question 10 (b)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark** for recognising that it was true that both prison and school restrict a person's freedom.

Question 11

The candidate was awarded **3 marks.** 1 mark for noting that the jump in a slippery slope would be to an 'exaggerated bad thing'. 1 mark for their example of a fallacious slippery slope. 1 mark for noting that an admissible slippery slope would involve smaller and more plausible steps.

Question 12 (a)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 12 (b)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Section 2 — knowledge and doubt - Descartes

Question 13

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 14

The candidate was awarded **3 marks.** 1 mark for noting that by doubting all his knowledge Descartes proved his own existence. 1 mark for the explanation that doubting is a form of thinking and doing so ensures his existence. 1 mark carried back from the answer to 15 that the cogito is self-affirming.

Question 15

The candidate was awarded **4 marks.** 1 mark for the point that as long as Descartes thinks then he exists and that is extremely hard to disagree with. 1 mark for the point that Descartes glosses over the problem of the malicious demon deceiving him. 1 mark for recognising the cogito could be seen as circular. 1 mark for noting that the malicious demon could be affecting Descartes understanding of language.

Section 3 — moral philosophy

Question 19

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 20

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 21

The candidate was awarded **0 marks**.

Question 22

The candidate was awarded **0 marks**.

Candidate 9

Section 2 — knowledge and doubt - Hume

Question 16
The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 17
The candidate was awarded **4 marks.** 1 mark for noting that Hume claimed we need 3 things to claim causation occurred: a relation in space, a relation in time, and a necessary connection. 1 mark for the explanation that there is no necessary connection in the example of the billiard balls. 1 mark for recognising that Hume states that therefore we cannot know what the cause of the red ball moving was. 1 mark for the claim that we should not, therefore, expect something to cause something else.

Question 18
The candidate was awarded **5 marks.** 1 mark for the point that observing an event once can be enough to induce a belief in causation. 1 mark for the example of food poisoning as such as a case. 1 mark for the claim that observing constant conjunctions don't always lead to a belief in cause and effect and 1 mark for the example of this in the gambler. 1 mark for the explanation that this is a weakness because it shows that people don't always fall into the habit of thinking one thing caused another even when they have seen it many times.

Section 3 — moral philosophy

Question 19
The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 20
The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.

Question 21
The candidate was awarded **1 mark** for their description of Act Utilitarianism but no marks for the description of rule utilitarianism.

Question 22
The candidate was awarded **6 marks**. 1 mark for explaining a strength of rule utilitarianism is that it is less time consuming than act utilitarianism. 1 mark for noting that act utilitarianism can justify potentially wrong acts and an additional mark for developing this with the example of the murder of an innocent. 1 mark for noting this would not occur with rule utilitarianism's rule 'never kill'. 1 mark for noting that rule utilitarianism could become meaningless and lead to act utilitarianism if there were lots of exceptions given to each rule. 1 mark for noting that rule utilitarianism would rule out the tyranny of the majority.