Section A (Multiple Choice Questions)

Choose the correct, or the most correct, answer for each of the 25 questions below. Use the MCQ sheet provided for your answers. Do not bend the MCQ form or use pen on it or else the machine will not be able to read your answers. Use a soft pencil to ensure that you make a dark mark on the MCQ form. Use an eraser to rub out mistakes. Do not cross them out.

Marks: 4 marks for a correct answer, –2 (minus two) for an incorrect answer.

Total (maximum) marks for section A: 100

Question 1:

An argument is valid if (and only if):

a. It has only true premises.
b. It has a true conclusion.
c. The premises must be true if the conclusion is true.
d. The conclusion must be true if the premises are true.
Question 2:

Which of the following is NOT an argument:

a. If you don’t write the exam, then you won’t pass the course.
b. You should not smoke, because it is harmful to those around you.
c. Universities should accept students regardless of their fees, then they should provide students with accommodation.
d. Dogs are faithful pets. Birds can be faithful pets. Therefore birds can be dogs.

Question 3:

An argument is sound if (and only if):

a. It has only true premises.
b. It has true premises and is valid.
c. It has true premises and a true conclusion.
d. The conclusion must be true whether or not the premises are true.

Question 4:

Consider the following claim, and choose the option that most accurately describes it:

\[ 3 + 3 = 7 \] (three plus three equals seven.)

(a) Does not state a claim.
(b) States a definitely false claim.
(c) States a claim, but in a vague form.
(d) May or may not state a claim – it is difficult to tell.

Question 5:

Consider the following claim, and choose the option that most accurately describes it:

*Critical reasoning skill is valued by employers.*

(a) States a definitely false claim.
(b) States a claim, but in a metaphorical way.
(c) States a probably true claim.
(d) Does not state a claim.
Question 6:
Consider the following claim, and choose the option that most accurately describes it:

Youth unemployment is a dark cloud over South Africa’s chances of economic growth.

(a) States a claim, but in a metaphorical way.
(b) Does not state a claim.
(c) May or may not state a claim – it is difficult to tell.
(d) States a definitely false claim.

Question 7:
Consider the following claim, and choose the option that most accurately describes it:

Cars run on gravy.

(a) Does not state a claim.
(b) States a claim, but in a vague form.
(c) May or may not state a claim – it is difficult to tell.
(d) States a definitely false claim.

Question 8:
Consider the following argument:

Conclusion: Pythons are reptiles.
Reason (main claim): Pythons are snakes.
Reason (helping premise): Snakes are reptiles.

Which statement best describes this argument:

(a) The argument is invalid, because lizards are also reptiles.
(b) The argument is invalid, because some reptiles are not snakes.
(c) The argument is valid.
(d) The argument is valid, because pythons really are snakes.

Question 9:
Consider the following argument:

Conclusion: California is a part of North America.
Reason (main claim): California is a part of the United States.
Which one of the helping premises below will make the argument valid:

(a) Californians are citizens of the United States.
(b) The United States is a part of North America.
(c) Hawaii, though part of the United States, is not part of North America.
(d) No co-premise is needed. This argument is fine as it is.

Question 10:

Consider the following argument:

Conclusion: This food is harmful.
Objection (main claim): The label on this food says that the SA Bureau of Standards has certified that it is not harmful.
Objection (helping premise): Certification by the SA Bureau of Standards is 100% reliable.

What scenario would be a suitable test for the validity of the above argument? (Note that this argument consists of a conclusion and an OBJECTION).

(a) The food is in fact not harmful.
(b) It is not true that SABS certification is 100% reliable.
(c) You have misread the label.
(d) No scenario showing that this argument is invalid is possible, because the argument is valid

Question 11:

Consider the following argument:

Conclusion: Socrates is made of chocolate.
Reason (main claim): Socrates lives in a tree.
Reason (co-premise): Anything that lives in a tree is made of chocolate.

What statement best describes this argument?

(a) The argument is valid.
(b) The argument is invalid.
(c) The argument is invalid, because Socrates did not actually live in a tree.
(d) The argument is invalid, because there is a plausible scenario where things like birds and lizards – which are not made of chocolate – also live in trees.
Question 12:

Consider the following argument:

Conclusion: Spurrett can cook.
Reason (main claim): Spurrett lives in an apartment with a kitchen.
Reason (co-premise): Spurrett owns a frying pan.

All of the claims in this argument, including the conclusion, are true. What statement best describes this argument?

(a) The argument is sound, because both the premises and the conclusion are true.
(b) The argument is valid, because both the premises and the conclusion are true.
(c) The argument is invalid, because there is a plausible scenario where Spurrett lives in a house.
(d) The argument is invalid, because there is a plausible scenario where the frying pan was a gift, and Spurrett does not know how to cook in his kitchen.

Question 13:

Consider the following argument.

Conclusion: Opening my fridge door causes the light to go on.
Reason (main claim): Whenever I open the door, I can see that the light is on.

What statement best describes this argument?

(a) The argument is valid because the conclusion is true.
(b) The argument is sound because the conclusion and the premise are both true.
(c) The argument is invalid because there is a plausible scenario where the light is on all the time, whether or not the door is open.
(d) The argument is invalid because there is a plausible scenario where the light is broken, and does not come on whether or not the door is open.

Question 14:

Consider the following argument.

Conclusion: Cigarettes are absolutely delicious.
Reason (main claim): People who smoke keep on wanting more cigarettes.

What statement best describes this argument?
(a) The argument is invalid because there is a plausible scenario where smokers are addicted to nicotine, and that is why they want to smoke more, irrespective of the taste.

(b) The argument is invalid because cigarettes taste horrible.

(c) The argument would be valid if a co-premise was added to the reason, saying “People often want more of delicious things.”

(d) The argument would be valid if a co-premise was added to the reason, saying “If something is delicious, people will want more of it.”

**Question 15:**

Consider the following argument. Note that the claims in the argument are numbered.

Conclusion: (1) Smith killed West.
Reason (main claim): (2) West was killed with rat poison.
Reason (helping premise): (3) Smith’s clothes showed traces of rat poison when he was arrested directly after West’s murder.

What sort of scenario would we have to try to construct to see whether this is a valid argument?

(a) Claims (1) and (2) true, and claim (3) false.

(b) Claim (1) true, but both claims (2) and (3) false.

(c) Claims (1) and (3) true, but claim (2) false.

(d) Claims (2) and (3) true, but claim (1) false.

**Questions 16, 17, 18 and 19:**

For each of the following claims, choose from the possible grounds listed below (numbered (a), (b), (c), (d) on the following page) the one which would most likely justify taking the claim in question to be true. You do not need to know whether all the criteria are actually satisfied, just identify the most promising type of ground for the claim.

(16) Combining Prilythone syrup with Ognonomosis tablets can sometimes lead to internal bleeding. (Assume that the claim was made by a qualified medical doctor.)

(17) If Siphiwe is taller than Lindiwe, and Lindiwe is taller than Sibusiso, then Siphiwe is taller than Sibusiso.

(18) A yellow car with registration plate CA 999 stood parked outside the Mount Nelson hotel in Cape Town until ten minutes ago. (Assume that we are in Durban when considering the claim.)
(19) No person alive today was born before the year 1800.

Remember that Grounds Worksheet starts with two questions:
First, what is the claim? Second, who made the claim?

(a) Common knowledge
- Is it widely believed?
- Is popular belief well-founded? (Is there an independent ground?)
- As far as you know, is the claim free from any serious dispute?

(b) Reliable expert opinion
- Is the claim concerned with a topic that requires special expertise?
- Is the claimant an expert in the relevant area who is sincere and trustworthy with no conflict of interest?
- As far as you know, is the claim free from serious dispute among the relevant experts?

(c) Reliable testimony
- Is the claim concerned with a matter not requiring special expertise?
- Was the claimant sincere, trustworthy and in a position to know the truth of the matter?
- As far as you know, is the claim free from any serious dispute?

(d) Necessary truth
- Is the claim one that couldn't possibly be false, given the concepts involved?
- Would denying the claim be a logical absurdity?
- Can you see these things clearly? Do you understand the claim well enough?

Questions 20, 21 and 22:

Consider the following passage from Descartes’ first Meditation:

“Whatever I have accepted until now as most true has come to me through my senses. But occasionally I have found that they have deceived me, and it is unwise to trust completely those who have deceived us even once.”

(20) What is the conclusion of this argument:

(a) “I should not trust something that has deceived me before.”
(b) “Occasionally my senses have deceived me.”
(c) “I should not (completely) trust my senses.”
(d) “Whatever I have accepted until now as most true has come to me through my senses.”
(21) What are the two premises of the argument:

(a) “I should not trust completely something that has deceived me before.”
    AND “I should not (completely) trust my senses.”
(b) “Occasionally my senses have deceived me.” AND “I should not completely trust my senses.”
(c) “Occasionally my senses have deceived me.” AND “I should not completely trust something that has deceived me before.”
(d) “I should not completely trust my senses.” AND “Whatever I have accepted until now as most true has come to me through my senses.”

(22) Which of the following is an objection – made by Descartes himself – to the above argument?

(a) “That doesn’t apply to my belief that I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a winter dressing-gown, holding this piece of paper in my hands, and so on.”
(b) “However, I have for many years been sure that there is an all-powerful God who made me to be the sort of creature that I am.”
(c) “For whether I am awake or asleep, two plus three makes five, and a square has only four sides.”
(d) “I will devote myself, sincerely and without holding back, to demolishing my opinions.”

Questions 23, 24 and 25:

Look at the following passage from Descartes’ first Meditation:

“Often in my dreams I am convinced of just such familiar events—that I am sitting by the fire in my dressing-gown—when in fact I am lying undressed in bed! Yet right now my eyes are certainly wide open when I look at this piece of paper; I shake my head and it isn’t asleep; when I rub one hand against the other, I do it deliberately and know what I am doing. This wouldn’t all happen with such clarity to someone asleep. As if I didn’t remember other occasions when I have been tricked by exactly similar thoughts while asleep!”

(23) Which of the following claims is Descartes making in this passage:

(a) Descartes thinks that he is probably dreaming.
(b) Descartes thinks that he could be dreaming what he is experiencing, but that he could not dream the feeling that he is not dreaming.
(c) Descartes thinks that he is probably not wearing his dressing gown.
(d) Descartes thinks that he could be dreaming what he is experiencing, including the feeling that he is not dreaming.
(24) Which statement about the dreaming argument is most correct:

(a) Descartes thinks that he has dreams just like his current experience of sitting by the fire, and so it is possible that an evil demon is deceiving him.
(b) Descartes thinks that there is no waking experience that he cannot dream, and so his waking experience cannot be used as evidence to tell whether he is dreaming or not.
(c) Descartes thinks that whether he is awake or dreaming, two plus three makes five, and a square has only four sides.
(d) Descartes thinks that his habitual opinions are indeed highly probable; although they are in also in a sense doubtful.

(25) Which of the following would be a genuine problem for Descartes’ dreaming argument?

(a) Evidence that people sometimes have detailed and convincing dreams about everyday experiences.
(b) Evidence that people sometimes dream about fantastic and strange situations very different from everyday life.
(c) Evidence that some experiences only happen in dreams and not in everyday experience.
(d) Evidence that some features of everyday experience never occur in dreams.

**Section B (Descartes)**

*Select TWO of the topics below and write a short (around 2 page) essay-form answer to it. Write BOTH of your answers for Section B in a single answer book.*

1. What does Descartes describe happening with the piece of wax in the second *Meditation*? What does he think we should conclude, and what are his reasons? (You may also offer an evaluation of Descartes’ argument.)

2. In the third *Meditation* Descartes offers an argument for the existence of God. Explain how the argument is supposed to work. (You may also offer an evaluation of Descartes’ argument.)

3. In the fourth *Meditation* Descartes tries to explain how he could be made by a perfect God who would not deceive him, and yet also have false beliefs. Explain how his argument about truth and error is supposed to work. (You may also offer an evaluation of Descartes’ argument.)
4. In the first *Meditation* Descartes argues that for philosophical purposes he should not trust his senses at all. Explain and evaluate his reasons.

5. In the sixth *Meditation* Descartes defends a dualist conception of human nature. Explain the main features of his mind-body dualism, and say whether and why you do, or don’t, think it is a reasonable position.

Marks: 50 for each answer.
Total Marks for Section B: 100

**Section C (Normative Ethics)**

*Long Essay Questions.*

Write an essay on ONE of the following three questions.

6. What is hedonism? Does Robert Nozick’s ‘experience machine’ thought experiment provide a strong objection to hedonism? Are any of the alternative theories of wellbeing preferable to hedonism?

7. What is utilitarianism? Is Bernard Williams’s integrity-based objection to utilitarianism successful?

8. In what circumstances, if at all, do deontologists think the constraint against doing harm may be outweighed by the goodness of outcomes?

Marks: 100 for the selected essay.
Total Marks for Section C: 100