



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

PHILOSOPHY ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

CONTENT SPECIFICATION

Admissions Assessment

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Cambridge

The total time for the Philosophy Admissions assessment is 1 hour.

You are expected to spend one hour completing this assessment; a slightly broader time window is provided to allow for download and upload of the paper. If you have notified us of extra time requirements, this will be factored into the allowable upload deadline. If you do experience any difficulty during the Assessment window, either technical or personal, you should report this to us as soon as possible afterwards, so that it can be taken into proper consideration.

The assessment has two parts.

Part I contains sixteen (16) multiple-choice questions. We suggest that you take no more than **20 minutes** to complete all questions. There are no penalties for incorrect answers, so you should attempt every question.

Part II contains two essay questions. You should select **one** question and answer it. We suggest that you take no more than **40 minutes** to read the question, answer the question, and upload your answer. The word limit is 1,000 words.

Below are some sample questions for Part I and Part II of the assessment. The sample questions are intended to illustrate the kind of questions you may be asked. You should not expect to be asked exactly these questions in the assessment itself.

To prepare for logic questions, look at the opening chapters of a very elementary text like Samuel Guttenplan, *The Languages of Logic* (Blackwell). It is not the case that you are expected to have any technical logical knowledge; but it can't but help to have encountered the idea of a 'valid' argument, etc. Books on 'informal logic' or 'critical reasoning' will also help (for general A level purposes too).

Sample Questions – Part I

1. If all jazz musicians are talented, which of the following is ruled out?
 - (a) Some classical musicians are also talented jazz musicians.

- (b) Some classical musicians who do not play jazz are talented.
- (c) Every classical musician is also a talented jazz musician.
- (d) Some classical musicians who are also jazz musicians are untalented.

2. Tigers in captivity frequently engage in obsessive patterns of behaviour, pacing back and forth on the same spot, swinging their heads from side to side, and other signs of stress. They do this even when their living areas are quite spacious. What this shows is that conditions of captivity are not a satisfactory substitute for the tiger's natural environment.

Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the above argument?

- (a) Tigers are especially ill-suited to a life in captivity.
- (b) Many tigers in the wild engage in obsessive patterns of behaviour.
- (c) Tigers in captivity live much longer than those living in the wild.
- (d) Tigers in the wild cover many miles a day when they are hunting for food.

3. There are any number of theories to explain these events and, since even the experts disagree, it is ---- the rest of us in our role as responsible scholars to ---- dogmatic statements.

Each of the following pairs of words can be inserted into the blanks, but which pair makes the best sense of the complete sentence?

- (a) paradoxical for ... refrain from
- (b) arrogant of ... compensate from
- (c) appropriate for ... abstain from
- (d) incumbent on ... issue forth

4. A relation is called 'reflexive' if everything bears that relation to itself. For example, the relation of *being identical to* is reflexive because everything is identical to itself. Which of the following is another reflexive relation?

- (a) is not the same weight as
 - (b) is the mother of
 - (c) is shorter than
 - (d) is no shorter than
 - (e) None of the above.
5. Albert says: 'Everything Caroline says is true'.
Betty says: 'Everything I say is false'.
Caroline says: 'Everything David says is true'.
David says: 'Everything Caroline says is false'.
Who is the only one who could be telling the truth?
- (a) Albert
 - (b) Betty
 - (c) Caroline
 - (d) David

Sample Questions – Part II

Question 1

Older Brother has been caught breaking Little Brother's toys. Suppose we know that the most efficient way to make Older Brother stop breaking Little Brother's toys is to pay him £10. Are we justified if despite this knowledge we choose to punish Older Brother instead? Explain your answer.

Question 2

The night before Camper is to set off into the desert where a bottle of water will be his only available drink, Poisoner puts a fatal poison into Camper's bottle. Early the

next morning, Spiller maliciously empties the bottle, in complete ignorance of what Poisoner had done the night before. Camper then sets off into the desert, in all innocence, and dies of thirst. Who caused Camper's death? Explain your answer.

Faculty of Philosophy 2023