

National Unit Specification: general information

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| UNIT | Christian Ethics in a Secular Context (Higher) |
| NUMBER | D414 12 |
| COURSE | Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Higher) |

SUMMARY

This unit seeks to develop understanding and analysis of an ethical area of study and to evaluate its relevance in today's society.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Provide a detailed explanation of the religious and moral issues in an ethical area of study.
- 2 With reference to a range of sources, analyse Christian and secular responses to issues in an ethical area of study.
- 3 Evaluate Christian and secular responses to issues in an ethical area of study.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following:

- Standard Grade Religious Studies at Grade 1 or 2 (or possibly Grade 3)
- Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
- a short course in Religious and Moral Education with evident potential at this level
- a social subject at an equivalent level.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher.

Administrative Information

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| Superclass: | DD |
| Publication date: | March 2002 |
| Source: | Scottish Qualifications Authority |
| Version: | 05 |

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Christian Ethics in a Secular Context (Higher)

CORE SKILLS

This unit gives automatic certification of the following:

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| Complete core skills for the unit | None |
| Core skills components for the unit | Critical Thinking H |

Additional information about core skills is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Christian Ethics in a Secular Context (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Provide a detailed explanation of the religious and moral issues in an ethical area of study.

Performance criteria

- a) Provide a detailed explanation of each specified moral issue from a traditional Christian perspective.
- b) Explain in some detail the contemporary Christian and secular responses to each moral issue.

OUTCOME 2

With reference to a range of sources, analyse Christian and secular responses to issues in an ethical area of study.

Performance criteria

- a) Analyse a traditional Christian response to each specified moral issue.
- b) Analyse contemporary Christian and secular responses to each moral issue.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate Christian and secular responses to issues in an ethical area of study.

Performance criteria

- a) Critically evaluate the relevance of a traditional Christian response to each specified moral issue.
- b) Critically evaluate contemporary Christian and secular responses to each moral issue.
- c) Present a logical and detailed conclusion, with supporting arguments, on the relevance of the moral issue to the contemporary world.

Evidence requirements

For Outcomes 1, 2 and 3, one essay response of approximately 600 words for one issue in the ethical area.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Christian Ethics in a Secular Context (Higher)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

There is a choice of an area of study from the following:

- rich and poor (either in the UK or in the developing world)
- gender issues
- ecology and environment
- war and peace.

From within the chosen ethical area of study, an issue is understood to have arisen as a result of the interplay of traditional Christian beliefs and values with those of a rapidly changing society. Part of that change has seen society becoming increasingly secular, although religion continues to flourish and have influence. By setting the study of Christian ethics within a ‘secular context’, the unit is emphasising the importance of taking seriously the information which comes from the rational, technical and scientific study of the world.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

There are a number of issues within each ethical area of study and in Outcome 1 candidates are required to make clear how each of the issues can be seen as a moral issue, e.g. the way in which ‘the control and proliferation of nuclear weapons’ can be understood as a moral dilemma, e.g. balancing the right to deter aggressors with the potential for mass destruction which these weapons possess.

In Outcome 2 candidates are required to analyse the moral issues, including viewpoints and the responses contained within recent reports, publications and developments of the churches and secular organisations. It is expected that candidates will anchor viewpoints and responses appropriately, both from Christian scriptures and tradition, and from Christian and secular documentation.

In attempting to fulfil Outcome 3, candidates are required to evaluate critically viewpoints and responses. Viewpoints and responses on issues should be evaluated in terms of their relevance to the contemporary world, taking account of information from the physical and social sciences. Candidates are also required to make judgements on the extent to which particular responses are faithful to Christian teaching as expressed, for example, through appropriate scriptural sources. The conclusion should be a logical summary of the analysis and evaluation of the moral issue.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Wherever possible, teaching and lecturing staff should use assessment judiciously and efficiently. It should be used to provide evidence of the achievement of all the outcomes in the units. A balance must be struck between the need both for some targeted assessment of specific knowledge and skills and for assessment instruments which encompass two or more outcomes. This allows for a more integrated approach to skills, while a more extended reference to information and viewpoints is demonstrated.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Christian Ethics in a Secular Context (Higher)

The evidence can be gathered during and/or at the end of the unit and must be completed under controlled conditions, ie under supervision without collaboration and the assistance of notes or teacher/lecturer advice. The evidence should be composed of one assessment relating to each of the outcomes with equal weighting being given to each outcome. The evidence should sample one issue in the chosen area.

The marking scheme should reflect the standard embodied in the performance criteria. This would allow the evidence to be considered as a whole. The level of attainment required for successful completion of the unit should represent satisfactory attainment of all the performance criteria.

SPECIAL NEEDS

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs/Candidates whose First Language is not English* (SQA, 1998).