



Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies — draft Course rationale and summary

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Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1LE

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Course rationale

Background

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

This Course will build upon the principles and practice papers for religious and moral education; religious education in Roman Catholic schools; and health and wellbeing. It will also build on the religious and moral education that schools and local authorities provide for all young people up to age 18.

The Course contributes to learners' understanding of the society in which they live and work by helping them to learn about, and from, religious beliefs, non-religious viewpoints, and experience.

Through the Course, learners are enabled to develop the four capacities. The Course will do this by developing knowledge, understanding and skills; offering insights into human beliefs, values and behaviour; and examining how religion, morality and philosophy can help people find meaning and purpose in life.

The Course allows learners to develop values and beliefs, learn to express these, and act in accordance with an informed conscience when making moral decisions. It encourages learners to develop an understanding and respect for different faiths, beliefs and values, and to put their values or beliefs into action in ways which benefit others in local, national and global communities.

In developing these four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence, the Course will also provide opportunities for learners to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. These include literacy, personal learning planning, and thinking skills. Developing understanding and respect for different views will develop a sense of responsible citizenship.

Purpose and aims of the Course

The purpose of this Course is to develop knowledge and understanding of religious, moral and philosophical issues and principles. It will explore the questions they raise and the solutions or approaches they offer. Learners will critically reflect on the theoretical underpinnings of these, and how these relate to their own experience and views. Religious and non-religious perspectives will be included.

The main aims of the Course are to enable learners to develop:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of the main beliefs and values of one world religion and the ways in which these affect the lives of its followers
- ◆ factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of religious and philosophical responses to moral questions
- ◆ factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of religious and philosophical debates

- ◆ the ability to reflect on religious, moral and philosophical questions and the theoretical issues involved, and relate these to personal or practical contexts
- ◆ a range of skills including investigation, critical analysis, evaluation using theoretical information and the ability to express beliefs and views in a reasoned and structured manner

The Course will help learners develop an understanding of key religious, moral and philosophical issues of relevance in the world today. This will help learners gain an awareness and understanding of the religious and social diversity of society. Learners will develop skills which are transferable to other areas of study and which they will use in everyday life.

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

This Course is appropriate for a wide range of learners including those who wish to achieve a greater understanding of religion and its place in society, those who want to learn more about the traditions, beliefs and values of their own religion, and those who wish to progress to more specialised study, further and higher education, training or employment.

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, it may be beneficial for learners to have the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following:

- ◆ Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (National 5) or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 5 Courses or component Units in another social subject
- ◆ equivalent qualifications

All Courses in this curriculum area will take account of the needs of all learners and provide sufficient flexibility to enable learners to achieve in different ways and at a different pace.

By undertaking this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills including: interpreting and understanding the context of key texts and sources; describing, explaining and analysing religious, moral and philosophical questions and responses to these; enquiring into and critically evaluating different beliefs, ideas and viewpoints; and expressing views about religious, moral and philosophical issues in a reasoned and structured manner.

Courses and Units in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies are provided from SCQF level 3 to SCQF level 7. Vertical progression is possible from this Course to Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies as well as to further or higher education courses which include the study of religious, moral and/or philosophical issues. Lateral progression is possible to other related subjects.

successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor

This Course provides an entry qualification for further and higher education, training, and a wide range of careers.

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Course summary

Course title: Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

SCQF level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course outline

Mandatory Units

World Religion (Higher)	(6 SCQF credit points)
Morality and Belief (Higher)	(6 SCQF credit points)
Religious and Philosophical Debates (Higher)	(6 SCQF credit points)

Course assessment (6 SCQF credit points)

This Course includes six SCQF credit points for 40 additional programmed hours to allow preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

Course structure and conditions of award

The Course develops a range of cognitive skills. It encourages active learning in the process of investigating religious, moral and philosophical issues. Learners need to acquire and apply relevant knowledge and understanding. Learners can reflect and articulate their personal faith position or viewpoint. Through the Course as a whole, learners must study beliefs and viewpoints of more than one religion.

The Course has three mandatory Units. Within each Unit there is a considerable degree of flexibility in themes which can be studied to allow personalisation and choice.

By undertaking this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills including: interpreting and understanding the context of key texts and sources; describing, explaining and analysing religious, moral and philosophical questions and responses to these; enquiring into, and critically evaluating, different beliefs, ideas and viewpoints; and expressing views about religious, moral and philosophical issues in a reasoned and structured manner.

The skills listed above will be developed and applied over a range of religious, moral and philosophical contexts in the following Units. Each Unit also offers opportunities for learners to focus on particular skills.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a variety of ways.

World Religion (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop techniques to interpret and understand the context of key texts and sources drawn from the world religion selected for study, and explain the influence these have on the lives of its followers. They will complete a detailed study of one religion from a choice of the six major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism). The Unit will develop knowledge and understanding of the religion's beliefs. It will involve study of the sacred writings, values, practices and traditions of the religion selected for study.

Morality and Belief (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop techniques to enquire into, evaluate and present reasoned and structured views about religious and non-religious responses to moral issues. They will develop knowledge and understanding of at least two contemporary moral issues from a choice and will apply some theoretical moral principles to the issues involved. Religious and non-religious responses will be explored. Religious viewpoints studied must be from the six major world religions.

Religious and Philosophical Debates (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop techniques to explain, critically analyse and present reasoned and structured views about at least two significant religious beliefs from a choice and responses to these beliefs from science or philosophy.

successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor

They will develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the areas concerned. The range of contexts for study will be flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

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Assessment

Information about assessment standards for the Course will be included in the *Course Assessment Specification* which will provide full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in Unit specifications.

They will be assessed pass/fail within centres.

SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units will be provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)¹. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

Learners will draw on, extend and apply the knowledge and skills they have learned during the Course. This will be assessed by a combination of a [question paper](#)² and a [project](#)³. The question paper will require demonstration of a breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills accumulated from across the Course. The project will require learners to extend and apply their knowledge and skills and will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

¹ Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html

² See link above for definition.

³ See link above for definition.