



Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Draft National Course Assessment Specification



Valid from August 2015

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Assessment Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Course outline

Course title:	Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
SCQF level:	7 (32 SCQF credit points)
Course code:	to be advised
Course assessment code:	to be advised

The purpose of the Course Assessment Specification is to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the Course assessment and the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed.

Course assessment structure

Component 1 — question paper	60 marks
Component 2 — project	40 marks
Total marks	100 marks

This Course includes eight SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Assessment Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment of this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

Assessment

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Course assessment

SQA will produce and give instructions for the production and conduct of Course assessments based on the information provided in this document.

Added value

The purpose of the Course assessment is to assess added value of the Course as well as confirming attainment in the Course and providing a grade. The added value for the Course will 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 this Course assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This added value consists of:

- ◆ drawing on, extending and applying the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the Course. This will be assessed by a question paper and a project
- ◆ demonstrating depth of knowledge and understanding and application of skills in the question paper. This will sample knowledge and understanding from the mandatory content of the Course and will require the application of skills
- ◆ demonstrating challenge and application through independent research related to an appropriate religious, moral or philosophical topic or issue, in the project

Grading

Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

The Course assessment is graded A–D. The grade is determined on the basis of the total mark for all Course assessments together.

A learner's overall grade will be determined by their performance across the Course assessment.

Grade description for C

For the award of Grade C, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

Grade description for A

For the award of Grade A, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

Credit

To take account of the extended range of learning and teaching approaches, remediation, consolidation of learning and integration needed for preparation for external assessment, six SCQF credit points are available in Courses at National 5 and Higher, and eight SCQF credit points in Courses at Advanced Higher. These points will be awarded when a Grade D or better is achieved.

Structure and coverage of the Course assessment

The Course assessment will consist of two Components: a question paper and a project.

Component 1 — question paper

The purpose of this question paper is to demonstrate application of skills and depth of knowledge and understanding from across the Course.

This question paper will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ in-depth knowledge and understanding of factual and theoretical aspects of religious, moral and philosophical issues
- ◆ critically analysing and evaluating religious, moral and philosophical questions
- ◆ in-depth analytical knowledge and understanding of the significance and impact of religion today
- ◆ expressing clear, well-reasoned, well-informed and structured views

The question paper will have 60 marks. There will be three Sections with the following mark allocations:

- ◆ Section 1: Philosophy of Religion (30 marks)
- ◆ Section 2: Medical Ethics (30 marks)
- ◆ Section 3: Religious Experience (30 marks)

All learners should complete Section 1.

Section 1: Philosophy of Religion will have 30 marks.

This Section will be made up of essay questions requiring the learner to draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired during the Course. Questions will be drawn from the content described in the 'Further mandatory information on Course coverage' section of this document.

Learners should then complete either Section 2 or Section 3.

Section 2: Medical Ethics will have 30 marks.

This Section will be made up of essay questions requiring the learner to draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired during the Course. Questions will be drawn from the content described in the 'Further mandatory information on Course coverage' section of this document.

Section 3: Religious Experience will have 30 marks.

This Section will be made up of essay questions requiring the learner to draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired during the Course. Questions will be drawn from the content described in the 'Further mandatory information on Course coverage' section of this document.

The question paper will have a greater emphasis on the assessment of knowledge and understanding than the project. The other marks will be awarded for the demonstration of skills.

Component 2 — project

The purpose of this project is to demonstrate challenge and application by demonstrating skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a project on a complex religious, moral or philosophical topic or issue.

The project will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ identifying an appropriate complex religious, moral or philosophical topic or issue about which there are alternative or different points of view
- ◆ independently researching the topic or issue, using a wide range of sources and drawing on in-depth knowledge and understanding
- ◆ organising findings to address the topic or issue
- ◆ evaluating different viewpoints on the topic or issue, at least one of which must be religious
- ◆ evaluating the usefulness or reliability of sources
- ◆ fully explaining and analysing the topic or issue and its relevance to the contemporary world
- ◆ analysing and synthesising information in a sustained line of argument
- ◆ drawing an in-depth, reasoned conclusion on the topic or issue
- ◆ using appropriate academic conventions including referencing of sources

The project will have 40 marks.

Setting, conducting and marking of assessment

Question paper

This question paper will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Learners will complete this in 2 hours.

Controlled assessment — project

The project is:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ conducted under some level of supervision and control

Setting the assessment

The assessment will be set by centres within SQA guidelines.

Conducting the assessment

The production of evidence for assessment will be conducted:

- ◆ in time to meet a submission date set by SQA
- ◆ independently by the learner

Marking the assessment

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

Further mandatory information on Course coverage

The following gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course. Course assessment will involve sampling from the skills, knowledge and understanding. This list of skills, knowledge and understanding also provides the basis for the assessment of Units of the Course.

Section 1: Philosophy of Religion

Within this section all learners should be able to demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of the philosophical principles and distinctions involved in the following a priori and a posteriori arguments for the existence of God, and responses to these. They will critically evaluate the effectiveness of these types of argument. They will also evaluate the extent to which modern responses have challenged traditional arguments.

Learners should also demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of the links between these ideas and new discoveries at the forefront of scientific understanding.

Cosmological argument and responses

- ◆ Aquinas's cosmological arguments
- ◆ Possibility and necessity
- ◆ Developments of the criticism of Aquinas' arguments
- ◆ Other cosmological arguments

Teleological argument and responses

- ◆ Use of analogy — strengths and weaknesses
- ◆ Key premise of Aquinas' argument is the claim that things that lack intelligence cannot move towards their end unless they are directed by someone with knowledge and intelligence
- ◆ Presence of suffering and evil
- ◆ Evolution
- ◆ Anthropic principle

Atheism

- ◆ Atheism as a belief position
- ◆ The grounds for atheism
- ◆ Criticisms of atheistic stances
- ◆ Ancient and modern arguments
- ◆ Presumption of atheism
- ◆ Coherence of the concept of God
- ◆ External coherence
- ◆ Internal coherence

Section 2: Medical Ethics

Within this section all learners should be able to explain and critically evaluate complex issues involving religion and medical ethics. Learners will develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of these issues and religious and non-religious responses. This will include an understanding of new discoveries at the forefront of medicine, legal developments, and contemporary case studies. They will critically evaluate the extent to which modern scientific or ethical developments have challenged traditional religious viewpoints.

Beginning of life

- ◆ Perspectives on when life begins
- ◆ The treatment of embryos
- ◆ Abortion
- ◆ Rights of unborn child, mother and father

Medical care

- ◆ Organ transplant and donation
- ◆ Methods for the procurement of organs
- ◆ Criteria for the allocation of organs
- ◆ Use of life support technology
- ◆ Perspectives on the value of life

End of life

- ◆ Perspectives on when life ends
- ◆ Palliative care of terminal illness
- ◆ Assisted suicide and euthanasia
- ◆ Self-determination of medical care/patient autonomy
- ◆ Purpose of medical care at the end of life

Section 3: Religious Experience

Within this section, all learners will critically evaluate the extent to which contemporary scientific or psychological causal explanations of religious experience have challenged traditional arguments about religious experience. This should include consideration of whether scientific or psychological explanations — including new developments where appropriate — can give a complete account of human experience.

All learners should also be able to demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of the continuing impact and importance of religious experiences in shaping and defining religion and its place in the contemporary world.

Nature of religious experience

- ◆ Main features of religious experience
- ◆ Religious experience today
- ◆ The impact of claims to religious experience
- ◆ Ethical implications of religious experience

Faith perspectives

- ◆ Mystical experience
- ◆ Role and importance of religious experience in a community of faith
- ◆ Personal conversion
- ◆ Development of religious experience
- ◆ Changing belief systems
- ◆ Religious experience argument for the existence of God
- ◆ How scientific understanding and faith can co-exist

Secular perspectives

- ◆ Psychological accounts of religious experience
- ◆ Scientific accounts of religious experience
- ◆ Sociological accounts of religious experience
- ◆ Limitations of sociological, scientific and psychological accounts
- ◆ How scientific understanding and faith can co-exist

Administrative information

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Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to Course Assessment Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date