

Our ref: MH/RMPS

January 2013

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools, FE colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the
delivery of Religious Studies and
Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies**

Action by Recipient
Response required
✓ Note and pass on
Note — update/information only

Contact: Mary Hainey at Glasgow
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E-mail: mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies.

Diet 2012

The External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports for diet 2012, formerly known as Principal Assessor and Senior Verifier reports can now be found on the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk). These include:

- ◆ External Assessment report Intermediate 1
- ◆ External Assessment report Intermediate 2
- ◆ External Assessment report Higher
- ◆ External Assessment report Advanced Higher
- ◆ External Assessment report Standard Grade
- ◆ Internal Assessment report Standard Grade
- ◆ Internal Assessment report National Qualification Units

Appeals

The procedures for Stage 1 and 2 appeals were completed during September and October. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following document prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements*

The document – *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* has undergone revision and will be posted on the SQA website in due course. The revised version clarifies what subject specific evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper based Courses.

When generating Estimates and compiling evidence for Absentee and assessment appeals consideration, you should also refer to:

- ◆ Course Arrangements documents, which include Course Grade Descriptions
- ◆ Course Assessment Specifications
- ◆ SQA question papers, including specimen question papers
- ◆ SQA marking instructions
- ◆ External Assessment reports, which include information on Grade Boundaries
- ◆ exemplification materials
- ◆ any other relevant information (eg Course Reports, subject update letters)

These materials, and more, are also available on the subject pages of our website.

The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted for Appeals this year were related to the fact that it did not adequately cover the whole Course. These were:

- ◆ the KU/AE balance clearly laid out in the Course Assessment Specifications and the specimen question paper was not adhered to
- ◆ questions lifted *en bloc* from one section or more of the past papers or specimen question paper
- ◆ using the specimen question paper, a past paper or a past commercially produced paper in its entirety
- ◆ prelim questions were drawn from too few sources
- ◆ where NABs were used the KU/AE balance was not adjusted or questions were not adapted

It is important to emphasise the clarity required when identifying sources. Centres must ensure that details of the sources of each prelim question are included with Appeals evidence. For example: Question 2 – SQA QP 2007 – Paper 1 or Section 1.

Centres should note that the above problems will disadvantage candidates and staff are encouraged to read the External Assessment Reports.

- ◆ Please note that in 2007 some changes took place to the marking of RMPS Int 1 & 2 AE questions. It was agreed to acknowledge analysis and evaluation as higher skills and award every AE point two marks. In addition to this, if a

candidate made a KU point in an AE answer which is then developed into a relevant AE point this is credited with one additional mark for KU. This has been well publicised by SQA however after reviewing evidence submitted for Absentee Candidates and Appeals it is apparent that many Centres have not yet adopted this practice. This is a major concern as candidates are being disadvantaged through no fault of their own. Please encourage your colleagues to introduce this practice.

Marking instructions

The 2012 question papers and finalised marking instructions for Course assessments are available on the NQ RMPS page of SQA's website. These can be useful documents for centres when constructing prelims and when preparing candidates for external assessment.

RMPS Courses

Religious Studies Standard Grade

The majority of candidates seem to have been presented at the correct level and performed accordingly.

RMPS Intermediate 1 & 2

At Intermediate 1 there was a decline in candidate performance compared to previous years with only 47% of candidates achieving a pass at A-C compared with 76% of candidates in 2011.

A matter of particular concern is that 48.8% of all candidates received a 'no award' suggesting that almost half of all candidates were presented at an inappropriate level.

SQA recommends that centres compare the estimates they give candidates to the actual mark the candidates receive to make sure that candidates are being entered at the appropriate level.

At Intermediate 2 candidates continue to perform well and appear to be presented at the appropriate level. There was also an improvement in AE responses by candidates which SQA attributes to centres preparing their candidates better for the exam.

RMPS Higher

Candidate performance overall was in line with the performance in 2011. Questions on the World Religion Unit were well answered with no significant issues being reported. Buddhism and Christianity were by far the most popular sections with roughly only 500 candidates attempting the other four options combined. Once again, Crime and Punishment was the overwhelmingly popular moral issue. Encouragingly, a small number of candidates had been presented in Global Issues. Candidates continue to perform well in the Christianity: Belief and Science Unit

RMPS Advanced Higher

Candidate performance has improved on previous years with candidates displaying an increased awareness of the need to maintain relevance in both the dissertation and the external exam.

Advanced Higher Dissertation

The revised list of approved dissertation topics for 2012/13 are now available and can be found on the Advanced Higher RMPS webpage: -
<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/40985.html>

Please ensure that candidate dissertations are relevant to the prescribed topic. The uplift date is Tuesday 23 April 2013.

Becoming a Marker

Each year the number of entries for the RMPS Courses is increasing. If you are interested in becoming a marker in RMPS, information and applications forms are available on the Appointee Management section of the SQA website. To become a Marker, we normally ask that you are in your third year of teaching the Course. We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. The RMPS Courses are Centrally Marked – this entails the marker marking scripts over one or two extended periods in the same venue.

In a number of subject areas we have had recent examples where the results in centres have improved dramatically after a member of staff joined the marking team. The experience of marking helps to increase the awareness of the demands of Course assessment and is proven to be excellent professional and personal development.

CfE Information

Subject Implementation Events

SQA will be running a programme of Subject Implementation Events (from October 2012 to March 2013) at various venues around the country, to support the introduction of the new National Courses at National 2 to National 5, being introduced in session 2013/14 to support Curriculum for Excellence.

The subject implementation events, which will be led by SQA Qualifications Development staff, will provide updates and guidance on course delivery and assessment for RMPS. All events will be interactive with the opportunity for delegates to engage in workshop sessions and discussions.

The events are targeted at Principal Teachers, Faculty Heads and Course/Subject Leaders. Centres have one place per subject and are expected to send the most appropriate person, to the closest event.

The dates of RMPS events are as follows: -

- 14 January Aberdeen National 3, National 4, National 5
- 16 January Edinburgh National 3, National 4, National 5
- 18 January Stirling National 3, National 4, National 5
- 21 January Glasgow National 3, National 4, National 5

Please note spaces may still be available at these events: -

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58884.html>

Award in Religion, Belief and Values

All schools were automatically approved to offer this qualification at SCQF levels 3-6 from session 2012/13.

This is a unique new Award which complements the National Courses and can be delivered during statutory/core religious education in all sectors

Award and Unit Support Notes are available on SQA's Secure Site for this qualification. Your centre's SQA Co-ordinator will have access to these materials.

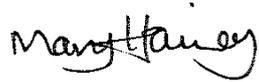
Unit assessment support will be available by end of January 2013.

An Award in Religion, Belief and Values Support Event has been arranged for Thursday 28 February 2013. Information and registration instructions will be given on the SQA website in early January.

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I hope that you find the above information useful. If you would like to discuss any matter in more detail, please do not hesitate to telephone me on 0845 213 5502 or e-mail me at mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Hailey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a dot above the 'i' in Hailey.

Mary Hailey
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences and Care