

National Qualifications Review

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Investigation Report Executive summary

This report is the outcome of an investigation into how to implement the agreed actions which were detailed in the RMPS Subject Review Report, published in May 2002.

The main concerns identified in the Review of RMPS were:

- ◆ The current structure has only one mandatory Unit at levels Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2, with three optional Units at Intermediate 1 and four at Intermediate 2.
- ◆ It is not clear that the Course structure reflects all the elements of the title of the Course. In particular the contribution of Philosophy has to be made clear, since the uptake of the *Metaphysics* Unit is very low.
- ◆ There is concern over whether the content of the *World Religions* Unit can be delivered in 40 hours and also over whether this Unit is, in reality, a set of options.
- ◆ The 'added value' of the Courses is not clear.
- ◆ External assessment at Intermediate 1 to Higher is greater than for other similar subjects.
- ◆ The volume of internal assessment at Advanced Higher exceeds agreed criteria.

The consultation process, carried out between January and March 2003, involved:

- ◆ a questionnaire sent to all presenting centres
- ◆ a range of interviews with individuals, both within centres and a number of agencies
- ◆ feedback from a two-day meeting of the Subject Advisory Group

The responses to the consultation process indicated substantial support for a revised Course structure comprising three mandatory Units at each of the levels from Intermediate 1 to Higher. This structure would meet some of the major concerns outlined above, enable the other concerns to be addressed at the next stage of the review process, and meet the design rules for National Qualifications.

The following recommendations have been made:

- ◆ Course structures should be developed on the basis of having three mandatory Units at each level from Intermediate 1 to Higher. The existing contexts should be subsumed within these three Units, provided this does not result in a duplication of content, with some rewriting of Outcomes for some contexts. The content of existing contexts should be reviewed to ensure that they reflect contemporary concerns and viewpoints. The *Metaphysics* Unit should not be included in this revised structure.
- ◆ At Advanced Higher the structure should remain as it is currently.
- ◆ The external assessment should consist of question papers at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher and, at Advanced Higher, should consist of a dissertation and a question paper.
- ◆ A clear statement of the philosophical processes and issues involved in each Unit, and of the skills and concepts which apply in the *World Religions* Unit, should be included in Course documentation.

At Higher, the possibility of increasing the time allowed for the external exam and the advisability of the inclusion of a fourth question should be investigated.

The full version of the investigation report is available on the appropriate NQ subject page of the Scottish Qualifications Authority website - www.sqa.org.uk

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