

Our ref: MH/RMPS

January 2010

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

**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

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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 2009

The External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports for diet 2009 (formerly known as Principal Assessor and Senior Verifier reports) can now be found on SQA's 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 documents prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (BA5212, November 2009).

Please note that the document *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* referred to above clearly specifies subject-specific evidence required when submitting an appeal for question paper based Courses.

When generating Estimates and compiling evidence for Absentee consideration and Appeals, 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.

Marking instructions

The question papers and finalised marking instructions for Course assessments at each level are posted on the NQ RMPS page of SQA's website.

RMPS Courses

The revised Courses were implemented in August 2009. Finalised versions of the Arrangements Documents for each level including Course and Unit codes are available to download from the NQ RMPS page of SQA's website.

As a result of feedback from centres, minor amendments were made in July 2009 and you should destroy any previous copies you hold. The changes which have been made are to ease teachers' delivery and there have been no changes to the mandatory content. Please note the revised layout of the mandatory aspects for each moral issue within the Morality in the Modern World Unit at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher.

The specimen question paper for all levels is available to download from the NQ RMPS page of SQA's website. Centres should note the change in approach to assessing Morality in the Modern World at Higher level. The following information is included within the Unit specification:

There is no choice of options in Area 1. All candidates must study all content in this Area. Candidates are introduced to the philosophical issue of the relationship between religious belief and moral values. They gain knowledge and understanding of the issues concerning the source of morality by studying the 'Euthyphro Dilemma'. Candidates then study sources of religious morality and the main principles of Utilitarian and Kantian ethics. Candidates will not be required to evaluate these principles. However, they will be required to apply these principles to the two issues identified in each moral topic, eg in medical ethics candidates will be expected to apply Kantian principles to the general areas of the treatment of embryos and euthanasia without going into specific issues within these topics.

Advanced Higher Dissertations

Titles in Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies are no longer required to be submitted for approval. An approved list of topics is available on the NQ RMPS page of SQA's website. The uplift date is 28 April 2010.

Electronic marks capture

It was proposed that the marking of the Intermediate 1 RMPS question paper would be included in the papers that use some form of electronic marking. Electronic marking from paper combines the advantages of central marking and traditional marking at home. Markers must complete practice papers and qualifications papers before going on to mark their actual allocation. The Principal Assessor is able to track the progress of Markers and is available online at specified times to assist Markers with queries.

At this stage SQA is not increasing the number of subjects and papers using this marking method. Intermediate 1 RMPS, and other question papers, will be reconsidered in future years.

Humanism Units

SQA in partnership with the Scottish Humanist Academy developed Units at Intermediate 1 and 2. The Units cover the principles of humanism and their

approaches to ethical issues. Members of the Academy include a number of RME teachers and they contributed to this development. Teachers should find the Units an excellent supplement to the current Units which explore moral issues and they can provide the 'view independent of religious belief' that is looked for in the RMPS Courses. They can also be used as free-standing Units. SQA published NABs for the Units and the Academy developed support materials which can be found on their website (www.humanist-academy.co.uk).

The support materials (Teacher and Student Guide) are on the site under the **Schools** and **Library** sections.

Assessment Panel

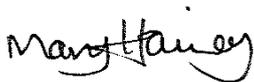
The RMPS Assessment Panel continues to meet annually to look at issues arising in the subject. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers.

Becoming a Marker

Each year the number of entries for the RMPS Courses are increasing. If you are interested in becoming a marker in RMPS, please visit the Appointee Management section of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk/am) or call our Marker Helpline (tel: 0131-561 6825) and we will send a form to you. 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 extended period 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.

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



Mary Hainey
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences and Care