

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies



This update contains information relevant to your subject and details of the support available to you.

We also publish updates on the new National Courses in the 'Updates and Announcements' section of the relevant [subject pages](#). I would encourage you to make regular use of our subject pages, where you will find support documents, answers to common questions, and links to other areas of interest. You can also sign up for 'My Alerts', SQA's e-mail update service, that notifies you whenever content you are interested in is added or updated on our website. Visit www.sqa.org.uk/myalerts to register.

I hope you find the following update helpful, and please contact me if you have any questions.

Elaine McFadyen
Qualifications Manager

The Qualifications Team

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Key messages from Diet 2014–15

Course Reports

We strongly recommend that you read the annual Course Reports for the subject(s) and levels you are teaching. These reports are produced following the annual diet of exams and are published by the end of October. The reports provide informed and valuable comment on the assessment for each Component in the Course, and include a summary of:

- candidate performance in the Course assessment
- areas in which candidates performed well
- areas which candidates found demanding

The reports also contain advice on preparing future candidates, and statistical data relating to grade boundaries. Course Reports are available from the relevant [subject pages](#) of our website.

Verification key messages

Key messages from verification in session 2014–15 were published over the summer. They are available from the relevant [subject pages](#), where you can access them from the 'Verification and Course Reports' heading in the 'Assessment Support' section.

Documents and assessment support materials

It is important that you read the full suite of documents for your Course, as well as those relating to assessment, and that you refer to the latest versions.

Information on documents and assessment support materials for National 1 to Advanced Higher can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments.

National 5 and Higher documents

In August 2015, we updated some of the mandatory documents for National 5 and Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies. This follows feedback gathered from centres during session 2014–15. Further information on the reasons for these changes and guidance on the next steps to take is provided below.

This information was also communicated to centres in August 2015.

Subject	Document	Reason for change	Next steps for centres
National 5 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	Course Assessment Specification	<p>Minor clarification of requirements of the assignment.</p> <p>World Religion section — ‘followers and wider society’ replaced by ‘living according to religious sources, beliefs and practices in the contemporary society’.</p> <p>Morality and Belief section — removal of ‘divine command’, clarification of question approaches.</p> <p>Religious and Philosophical Questions section — Part A: Origins of Life title amended to Origins. Removal of the questions under each Part.</p>	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised document.
Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	Course Assessment Specification	<p>Amendment to mark allocations within question paper. Section 2 will always comprise two 10-mark questions and Section 3 will always comprise one 20-mark question.</p> <p>Clarification of requirements of the assignment.</p> <p>World Religion section — ‘followers and wider society’ replaced by ‘living according to religious sources, beliefs and practices in the contemporary society’.</p> <p>Morality and Belief section — removal of ‘moral relativism’ and ‘divine command’, clarification of question approaches.</p> <p>Religious and Philosophical Questions section — Part A: Origins of Life title amended to Origins. Removal of the questions under each Part.</p>	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised document.

Please refer to the ‘Notification of Changes’ tables for your curricular area which provide a summary of the changes to each document and include details of the revised version numbers. These are available at www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges.

National 5 and Higher Coursework information

Following feedback from the 2014–15 diet, updated versions of the following documents were published at the end of September 2015:

- **Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies National 5 Coursework Assessment Task**
- **Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies National 5 General Assessment Information**
- **Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies National 5 Course Assessment Task: Candidate Instructions**
- **Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Higher Coursework Assessment Task**
- **Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Higher General Assessment Information**
- **Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Higher Exemplar Question Paper**
- **Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Higher Specimen Question Paper**

Further information on the reasons for these changes and guidance on the next steps to take is provided below.

This information was also communicated to centres in September 2015.

Subject	Document	Reason for change	Next steps for centres
National 5 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	Coursework Assessment Task/General Assessment Information/Course Assessment Task – Candidate Instructions	<p>The Marking Instructions for the Assignment have been amended to clarify the requirements of the task and the way in which the marks are awarded. Some changes have been made to the allocation of marks within specific sections of the marking instructions; the overall mark allocation remains unchanged.</p> <p>The documents have been updated to clarify task requirements and reflect changes made to detailed Marking Instructions.</p> <p>Amended advice regarding the use of the resource sheet and a word limit has also been incorporated into all three documents.</p>	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised document.
Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	Coursework Assessment Task/General Assessment Information	<p>The Marking Instructions for the Assignment have been amended to clarify the requirements of the task and the way in which the marks are awarded. Some changes have been made to the allocation of marks within specific sections of the marking instructions; the overall mark allocation remains unchanged.</p> <p>The documents have been updated to clarify task requirements and reflect changes made to</p>	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised document.

		<p>detailed Marking Instructions.</p> <p>Amended advice regarding the use of the resource sheet and a word limit has also been incorporated into all three documents.</p>	
Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	Exemplar Question Paper/Specimen Question Paper	<p>Within the Specimen Question Paper, amendments have been made to the first question in each part of the Morality and Belief section, to reflect the changes made within the Course Assessment Specification.</p> <p>Within both the Specimen and Exemplar Question Paper the title Origins of life has been amended to Origins.</p>	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised document.

The Detailed Marking Instructions and Marking Instructions summary table for the assignments have been amended to clarify the requirements of the tasks and the way in which marks are awarded. The section regarding the use of the resource sheet has also been amended. Candidate instructions have been updated to include this amended advice regarding word count in the resource sheet.

Amended advice regarding use of the resource sheet and word count limit has also been included in all documents.

Please note that the Course Assessment Task document and Candidate Instructions are available from our secure website and you can arrange access to them through your SQA Co-ordinator.

You can view the Notification of changes spreadsheets for National 3 to Higher, and Advanced Higher at www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges.

Advice and guidance

Advanced Higher: scaffolding in question papers

The previously published Advanced Higher Specimen Question Paper included, under each question, the statement '*Present a reasoned argument and conclusion*'.

The forthcoming Exemplar Question Paper (EQP) will not include this scaffolding guidance. This change has been made to reflect the approach in related subjects and to improve the clarity of questions.

Such scaffolding guidance is **not** expected to be included in future live papers, unless it is absolutely necessary to ensure that the demand of a particular question is clear.

Where it is helpful, candidates should be directed to the General Marking Principles for a full explanation of how marks are awarded in Advanced Higher question papers.

Coming up in 2015–16

Understanding Standards 2015–16

From the end of October 2015, we will publish further Understanding Standards packs for National 1 to Higher. These packs contain candidate evidence and commentaries for Unit assessment and internally assessed Components of Course assessment.

From November 2015 to January 2016, we will hold subject-specific Understanding Standards events for teachers and lecturers. The main focus of these events will be on Course assessment at Higher. Understanding Standards events for Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies will take place on the following dates:

- **Wednesday 11 November 2015 in Glasgow**
- **Thursday 12 November 2015 in Edinburgh**
- **Friday 13 November 2015 in Aberdeen**

Materials from the recent Nominee training events will also be published on our website.

For more information, visit www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards

Details of the Understanding Standards materials for each subject are available from the [subject pages](#)

Marker recruitment opportunities for 2016

We are now accepting Marker applications from teaching professionals to contribute to the 2016 examination diet. If you are interested in joining us as a Marker please visit the [appointee opportunities](#) section of our website where you will find a marker advert for all subjects and levels, with details of the role.

Our current Markers will confirm to you that the experience of marking helps increase their awareness of the demands of Course assessment and that marking is excellent professional and personal development.

Please check www.sqa.org.uk/appointees regularly for other appointee opportunities which may be of interest to you.

Contact us

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