

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies — Higher

Notes of Guidance for Teachers/Lecturers on the Extended Essay

The Extended Essay will be planned and conducted under supervision, written up under controlled conditions (with a two hour time allocation) and externally assessed. It will be approximately 1,500-2,000 words in length. Teachers/lecturers must ensure candidates choose an issue from one of the Units they have studied in the RMPS course. **Candidates will be penalised if their issue is not from within the Units of the RMPS course.** Appended to these notes are exemplars which conform to the requirements, to assist teachers/lecturers in advising candidates as to the general nature of appropriate issues.

With each candidate's response the teacher/lecturer responsible must include a completed Flyleaf. A separate Flyleaf for the plan must also be submitted. On this the Core Skills checklist must be completed and signed. The completed checklist gains the candidate an automatic award of the Planning and Organising component at Problem Solving at this level.

1 Introduction: The Extended Essay

The Extended Essay component of the Higher is intended to develop the skills of working with a variety of complex sources. It will also exercise the skills required in structuring a more sustained presentation of the conclusions than is required in the internally assessed or exam paper questions.

2 The External Assessment of the Extended Essay

A total of 35 marks will be available for the Extended Essay. A Plan of no more than 250 words must be submitted along with the completed Extended Essay, but the mark allocation will be based solely on the quality of the Essay. Candidates are likely to lose marks if they exceed the 250 word limit for the Plan. The allocation of marks to each aspect of the Essay is given below, along with an indication of the features involved.

i Identification and retrieval of information **(10 marks)**

appropriateness and clarity of stated aim

identification of a wide variety of primary and secondary sources

quality of selection of relevant information from sources

ii *Analysis and evaluation* (15 marks)

effective analysis, interpretation and evaluation of information

attention paid to context and/or authorship of information researched

quality of discussion, consistency and/or contradiction within and between sources

iii *Orderly presentation of essay* (10 marks)

clarity and coherence in development of essay

overall structure and progression

quality of conclusions

appropriateness of conclusions in relation to aims of essay

3 **Assessment and the Corresponding Qualities Required**

The following notes indicate the qualities required in candidates' Extended Essays in order to attain marks at various points in the range available. It should be noted, however, that an Essay falling into a particular marks category may not necessarily meet every aspect of the description given for that category.

An Excellent Extended Essay

In this category an Extended Essay has an appropriate and clearly stated aim which is valid in terms of the syllabus. It has been thoroughly researched and a wide range of relevant information from both primary and secondary sources has been identified. The material researched has been well understood and a number of varying aspects of the area of study have been evaluated and analysed. The overall structure and progression of the Extended Essay is excellent, a valid conclusion is reached and in all respects the work is first class.

A Good Extended Essay

In this category an Extended Essay has an appropriate and clearly stated aim relevant to the syllabus. It has been well researched and a wide range of relevant information, from both primary and secondary sources, has been identified. However, analysis of the information is incomplete and, although a valid conclusion to the essay is presented, evaluation of some aspects of the study may be lacking. The overall structure and progression of the Extended Essay is of a good standard, an appropriate conclusion is reached and in general it is a commendable piece of work.

A Satisfactory Extended Essay

In this category an Extended Essay has a clearly stated aim relevant to the syllabus. It has been reasonably well researched, with reference to both primary and secondary sources, but the material gathered, although relevant, may be presented in a descriptive manner indicating that it has not been fully interpreted and analysed. A conclusion to the Essay is presented but evaluation of certain aspects of the area of study may lack depth and contain weaknesses in research and/or analysis.

A Poor Extended Essay

In this category an Extended Essay lacks a clearly stated aim relevant to the syllabus, has been inadequately researched and shows significant gaps in the retrieval of information. It is weak on analytical skills and gives little evidence of evaluation. The overall structure and progression of the essay is poor and the conclusions are weak.

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Extended Essay Exemplar Issues

The following is a set of exemplar issues which would be appropriate for study in accordance with the RMPS Course. **It is emphasised that these are examples only, provided as guidance to teachers/lecturers in the task of advising candidates on their proposed issues.** Examples are given for each of the World Religions, Ethics, Critiques, units of the Course. They have been selected in such a way as to reflect the possibilities for this aspect of the Course.

World Religions

- (i) 'The role of Muhammad as prophet and exemplar to Muslims.' How far is he seen in that capacity today?
- (ii) A study of the centrality of Torah within Judaism.
- (iii) A discussion of the Christian concept of Resurrection and its meaning today.
- (iv) How far was Siddharta Gautama a product of his religious and cultural background?

Christian Ethics In A Secular Context

- (i) How far does Genesis 1 make clear for human beings their responsibility for the earth?
- (ii) What place is there for women in the Ministry of the Christian Church?
- (iii) How relevant is the Just War theory in a nuclear age?

Christianity: Critiques And Challenges

- (i) Is there a 'quantum leap' between scientific and religious beliefs about the origins of the universe?
- (ii) To what extent are humans predisposed to religion as we enter the 21st Century?
- (iii) 'Religion is the opium of the people.' How would Christians respond, and is their response valid?

Candidates must submit their Plan, which must not exceed 250 words, on the Pro forma provided. They may present their Plan in what they consider the most appropriate manner, eg in note form, in a spider diagram format etc. **Candidates must not submit a 'mini essay' in place of a Plan** and it should be noted that marks are likely to be deducted from their Extended Essay if the Plan exceeds the stated length of 250 words.

The declaration at the end of the Pro forma must be read and signed by the teacher/lecturer responsible.