

Our ref: TS/RMPS

12 April 2007

To: SQA Coordinator (Secondary Schools, FE Colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS
Customer Account 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 to RMPS Staff

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Please pass this letter to the member of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies.

Understanding Standards Programme

WE have recently held two successful Understanding Standards seminars. One was for teachers who have marked SQA Question Papers in the past, and the other was open to all teaching staff. The latter was held in Stirling in mid March and was vastly over-subscribed. We increased delegate numbers to 100 and, while that allowed a greater number of teachers to attend, the venue found it difficult to cope with such a large group. It is intended to send out the papers used at this seminar to those on the reserve list and to hold another similar seminar for those teachers in the autumn.

Overall, feedback from the seminar was very good (apart from the hotel arrangements!) and I have been asked by delegates to emphasise the following:

- ◆ Clearly written bullet points are acceptable in answers but these must include clear descriptions or explanations as appropriate to the questions asked. A simple phrase on its own is unlikely to gain any marks.
- ◆ Intermediate 2 marking will follow a similar pattern but, with less marks involved and no questions with a split KU/AE allocation, changes are likely to have less of an impact.

Higher question papers

After discussions with the Setting Team and with a number of teaching staff it has been decided that questions will not be limited as originally intimated. This means that in World Religion questions the various parts may cover all three Organising Principles and in the Morality questions parts may be drawn from both topics. Feedback on last year's exams indicated that teachers thought this to be fairer to the candidates.

A reminder that as from 2007 the duration of the Higher RMPS exam will be as follows:

- ◆ Paper 1 – 1 hour 45 minutes
- ◆ Paper 2 – 55 minutes

This is a slight difference from Diet 2006 and gives candidates 5 minutes more for Paper 2 but 5 minutes less for Paper 1.

Appeals

Following the information given in my last letter of October 2006 and the publication of the updated guidance on Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals, we would like to take this opportunity to clarify the advice provided in generating evidence for Appeals.

The evidence for the Question Paper could include:

- ◆ A prelim which covers all Units and replicates the standard, format, duration and security of SQA's question paper. This could support an appeal for Grades A, B and C and would be the most convincing evidence for an Appeal for Grade A.
- ◆ A prelim which covers all Units and is split into its constituent papers or parts and the two papers or parts have been separated by a period of time rather than being taken on one occasion. Centres should be aware that the level of demand is less than the Course assessment. The level of demand can be increased in a number of ways such as raising the cut-off scores or by increasing the level of challenge of the prelim. This could support an appeal for Grades A, B and C.
- ◆ A prelim which covers a minimum of two Units of the Course and a high scoring NAB, for the third Unit. This could support an appeal for a Grade C (possibly Grade B), but not an appeal for a Grade A.

Becoming a marker

Yet again the number of candidates entered for the RMPS exams has increased. We do have a number of new markers but if this yearly increase continues we will be looking to recruit more markers. If you are interested in becoming a marker in RMPS, please contact us on 0131-561 6825 or by e-mail markers@sqa.org.uk and we will send a form to you. To become a Marker, we normally ask that you have taught the Course for at least three years, preferably within the past three years. At the moment, the RMPS Courses are Centrally Marked – this entails the marker marking scripts over one extended period in the same venue. 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 tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk.

Yours faithfully



Tom Stannage
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences and Care