

## RMPS/SQP344

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Religious, Moral and  
Philosophical Studies  
Advanced Higher

NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Page</i>
Course Assessment Specification	2
Specimen Question Paper	5
Specimen Marking Instructions	9

## **Course Assessment Specification**

### **Religious Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)**

The purpose of this document is to provide:

- details of the structure of the Question Paper in this Course
- details of the structure of the Dissertation that contributes to this Course
- guidance to centres on how to use information gathered from the Question Paper in this Course to estimate candidate performance.

#### **Part 1:**

**This part of the Course Assessment Specification details the structure of the Question Paper in this Course.**

The Question paper:

- Consists of three sections; A, B and C.
- Has a mark allocation of 60 and a time allocation of 2 hours.
- Will assess integration of knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation across the Units.
- The paper examines the content of the Philosophy of Religion Unit, the Religious Experience Unit and the Medical Ethics Unit.
- Candidates should answer two Sections; Section A is mandatory and will cover the Philosophy of Religion Unit; and either Section B which covers the Religious Experience Unit or Section C which covers the Medical Ethics Unit.
- The questions in each section will follow the pattern outlined below.

#### *Section A – Total marks 30*

- This section will contain two questions from which candidates will choose to answer one
- The questions will sample across the Unit.
- The questions may relate to two of the topics in the Philosophy of Religion Unit.
- Each question will require an essay response.

#### *Section B and C – Total marks 30*

- Sections B and C are optional Units however candidates are required to answer one Section.
- Section B will contain two questions from the Religious Experience Unit while Section C will contain two questions from the Medical Ethics Unit.
- The questions will sample across the relevant Unit.
- The questions may relate to two of the topics in the relevant Unit.
- Each question will require an essay response.

## Part 2:

### **This part of the Course Assessment Specification details the structure of the Dissertation in this Course.**

A minimum of five dissertation topics for each Unit will be provided each year by SQA and candidates can generate a title they wish to use for their dissertation. These will be changed on a rolling basis. There is no requirement to submit titles to SQA each year for approval by the Principal Assessor. The Dissertation is submitted to SQA by the date specified in the Operational Guide.

The Dissertation:

- will be based on the investigation undertaken in the Personal Research Unit.
- should be approximately 4000 words in length.
- will attract a total of 40 marks.
- is assessed externally.

Marks are allocated on the following basis:

<b>Knowledge and understanding (KU)</b>	
Research: relevant information identified and retrieved	5
Factual: accurate presentation of factual information	5
Sources: identification and retrieval of relevant primary and secondary sources; bibliography	5
<b>Analysis and evaluation (AE)</b>	
Issues: identification of relevant issues	7
Viewpoints: presentation of a range of viewpoints on the issues raised	7
Criticism: identification of the strengths and weaknesses as well as they connections between responses	7
<b>Sources (AE)</b>	
Use of sources to support/highlight analytical or evaluative points	4

### Part 3

**This part of the Course assessment specification provides guidance on how all components contribute to the Course award. It also indicates how to use the assessment information gathered from these components to estimate candidate performance.**

The Course assessment is based on one question paper and the Dissertation:

Component	Mark Range
Question Paper	60
Dissertation	40
Total Marks	100

The mark range for each component of the paper reflects the equal weighting given to each Unit which makes up the Course.

In the Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Advanced Higher Course cut-off scores are set at approximately 70% for grade A and 50% for grade C with B grade falling midway at between 60% and 69%.

The following table gives an indication of appropriate cut-off scores:

Grade	Band	Mark Range
A	1	85 – 100
A	2	70 – 84
B	3	65 – 69
B	4	60 – 64
C	5	55 – 59
C	6	50 – 54
D	7	45 – 49
NA	8	40 – 44
NA	9	0 – 39

The cut-off scores may be lowered if question paper components turn out to be more demanding. Alternatively they may be raised if question paper components turn out to be less demanding.

#### ***Worked example***

- In a centre's own prelim, a candidate scores 36/60.
- The centre's view is that their prelim is slightly less demanding than the SQA examination.
- Using the mark range, a realistic estimate will be **band 5** rather than band 4.

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NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates should answer two questions:  
one from Section A-Philosophy of Religion, and  
one from the Optional Units, either Section B-Religious Experience or  
Section C-Medical Ethics.

Each section should be answered in a separate answer booklet.  
30 marks are assigned to each question.

**SECTION A**

**Philosophy of Religion**

1. How far does the atheist have grounds for disbelief?

Your answer **may** include:

- A description of the atheist's position
- An analysis and evaluation of the basis of the atheist's position
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

**(30)**

2. "Evolution provides evidence that God is the Designer of the Universe."

How valid is this statement?

Your answer **may** include:

- A description of discoveries in evolution
- An explanation of design arguments
- An analysis and evaluation of the validity of the statement
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

**(30)**

## SECTION B

*Marks*

### Religious Experience

1. “The mystic does not give us any information about the external world; he merely gives us indirect information about the condition of his own mind.”

(A.J. Ayer)

To what extent do you agree?

Your answer **may** include:

- A brief description of what is meant by religious experience
- An analysis and evaluation of mystical aspects of religious experience
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout. **(30)**

2. “ Secular explanations for religious experience are unconvincing.”

Evaluate this statement

Your answer may include:

- A description of a range of secular interpretations
- An explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of secular explanations
- Responses to secular interpretations
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout. **(30)**

**SECTION C**

**Medical Ethics**

1. What ethical issues should be considered in determining the allocation of organs?

Your answer **may** include:

- A description of the issues related to organ allocation
- An analysis and evaluation of the ethical issues involved
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

**(30)**

2. “Taking action to end life at its conclusion, is never justified.”

How successfully can this statement be defended?

Your answer **may** include:

- A description of situations when these actions might be used
- An analysis of the religious and ethical issues raised
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

**(30)**

*[END OF SPECIMEN QUESTION PAPER]*

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Essays are marked holistically. In order that centres have an idea of how the marks are awarded the following list is provided. Centres should note that the distribution of marks noted below is for guidance.

<b>Knowledge and understanding (KU)</b>	
Accurate and relevant information	4
Identification and description of issues <b>relevant to the question</b>	4
Identification of appropriate sources	4
<b>Analysis and evaluation (AE)</b>	
Explanation of the issues <b>relevant to the question</b>	4
Comparisons and contrasts of responses to the issues and/or Identification of strengths, weaknesses, agreement and disagreement in responses to the relevant issues	6
Application of appropriate sources	4
Conclusions drawn throughout the answer	4

## Philosophy of Religion

### 1. How far does the atheist have grounds for disbelief?

Your answer **may** include:

- A description of the atheist's position
- An analysis and evaluation of the basis of the atheist's position
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

#### Marking Information:

- Clearly describe the atheist's position

Presumption of Atheism

- What is presumption?
- Presumption as a procedural notion based on goals or purposes that are desirable
- Inductive reasoning—does this present a problem?

- Analyse and evaluate the basis of the atheist's position

Internal coherence

- Omnipotent?
- Omniscient?
- All Powerful?

External coherence

- Freewill or predestination?
- Issues of suffering and evil
- Is individual well-being God's concern?

Unless there are grounds or evidence for God's existence we should presume that there is no God.

God's omnipotence cannot be maintained.

God cannot be all-knowing.

God's goodness and power is not compatible with the evils of the world.

Come to a personal conclusion based on the analysis carried out.

2. “Evolution provides evidence that God is the Designer of the Universe.”

How valid is this statement?

Your answer **may** include:

- A description of discoveries in evolution
- An explanation of design arguments
- An analysis and evaluation of the validity of the statement
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

**Marking Information:**

Description of various discoveries and key principles of evolution.

Description of design arguments and their development.

Discussion of the validity of the statement eg aspects of evolutionary theory which suggest design, aspects of evolutionary theory which suggest chance.

Discussion of various responses to design and evolution eg, Hawking, Dawkins, Hitchens, Dembski, McGrath, Davies.

## Religious Experience

1. “The mystic does not give us any information about the external world; he merely gives us indirect information about the condition of his own mind.”

(A.J. Ayer)

To what extent do you agree?

Your answer **may** include:

- A brief description of what is meant by religious experience
- An analysis and evaluation of mystical aspects of religious experience
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

### Marking Information:

Briefly describe what is meant by religious experience

- What, if anything, makes a religious experience religious?
  - How important is religious experience for humanity?
  - Is it confined to those who can be identified as “religious”?
  - Is there such a thing as a “core” religious experience?
  - Is it a rare, widespread or common phenomenon?
  - Are religious experiences of representatives of “other” faiths as valid as Christian experiences?
- 
- Analyse and evaluate mystical aspects of religious experience

Mystical

- Unexplained phenomena
- Changing experience—belief or divine
- “Other-worldly”

Strengths

- Commitment
- Sincerity
- Fulfillment

Weaknesses

- Guilt
- Authority or Authority figures
- Need for pain or suffering to emphasise goodness

Come to a personal conclusion based on the analysis carried out.

2. “ Secular explanations for religious experience are unconvincing.”

Evaluate this statement

Your answer may include:

- A description of a range of secular interpretations
- An explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of secular explanations
- Responses to secular interpretations
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

**Marking Information:**

a range of secular interpretations, from, eg psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology

- an understanding of the meaning(s) of “secular”
- the assumptions/presuppositions/methodology/ies of secular interpretations
- seminal secular works in the field.
  
- consideration of evidence for the statement, for example allegedly irreconcilable differences in methodology, non-sequitur conclusions, bias of writers, etc
- consideration of evidence against the statement, for example cumulative case, objectivity of scientific research, weakness of non-scientific, ie faith interpretations
- possibility of statement being partially accepted/rejected
- discussion about what might constitute a “flaw” in an argument or case.

## Medical Ethics

### 1. What ethical issues should be considered in determining the allocation of organs?

Your answer **may** include:

- A description of the issues related to organ allocation
- An analysis and evaluation of the ethical issues involved
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

#### Marking Information:

- Describe the issues related to organ allocation
  - Organ and tissue donation laws (UK and other legal systems)
  - Organ and tissue procurement (including donation, trade, xenografting, synthetic)
  - Medical uses and implications
  - Legal restrictions and implications
  - Examples of current regulations (UK and other legal systems)
  - Guidance from medical governing bodies eg BMA
- Analyse and evaluate the ethical issues involved
  - Length of prospective life?
  - Quality of prospective life?
  - Costs v benefits?
  - Merit of patient?
  - Some combination of the above?
  - Use of relevant sources

Come to a personal conclusion based on the analysis carried out.

#### Religious

- Donors (cadaveric, living, anencephalic infants, foetuses)
- Types of procurement (voluntary, involuntary, compulsory, trade, non-human species, synthetic)
- Value of Individual
- Divine Purpose
- Value of Suffering

#### Moral

- Utilitarian and Kantian views

Come to a personal conclusion based on the analysis carried out.

2. “Taking action to end life at its conclusion, is never justified.”

How successfully can this statement be defended?

Your answer **may** include:

- A description of situations when these actions might be used
- An analysis of the religious and ethical issues raised
- Reasoned and personal conclusions throughout.

**Marking Information:**

- Describe situations when these actions might be used
  - Euthanasia
  - Life support machines
  - Palliative Care
  - Decision makers—patient, family, medical professional, legislators?
- Analyse the religious and ethical issues raised

Ethical

- Definitions of beginning of life; death
- Consent
- Quality v Quantity
- Cost

Religious

- Sanctity of Life
- Divine Purpose
- When the soul enters and departs the body

Moral

- Utilitarian and Kantian views

*[END OF SPECIMEN MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]*