

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies



Welcome to the first edition of the new-look subject update which replaces the letter centres you would have previously received. This complements the regular monthly and weekly SQA communications, with more information relevant to Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (RMPS).

Please share the contents with colleagues involved in the delivery of NQ RMPS.

Contacting the team

Should you require further information, the customer services team will be happy to assist.

Customer Support Team

Tel: 0303 333 0330

mycentre@sqa.org.uk

Updates to documents

In the **special edition June 2014 update** on the new National Qualifications, SQA explained that it would be making updates to documents containing mandatory information on National 3 to National 5 Courses, along with the associated Unit assessment support packs. Further details regarding revisions to documents are shown below.

National 5 — C764 75

The National 5 assignment assessment task has been amended. While the assessment task itself remains unchanged, points have been added for clarity where required, both in the task instructions and candidate instructions. Changes have also been made to the way in which marks are allocated within the Marking Instructions. Overall marks for the assessment task remain unchanged.

Practitioners are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the latest versions of the general assessment information document available on SQA's website and the assignment assessment task document on SQA's secure website. Items held on SQA's secure site can be accessed via the centre's SQA Co-ordinator.

A high-level summary of these updates can be found in the Notification of changes spreadsheet for National 5 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies at **www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges**

New Higher — C764 76

Some documents containing mandatory information on the new Higher were reviewed and revised in April and May 2014, along with the Higher Unit assessment support packs.

A high-level summary of these updates can be found in the Notification of changes spreadsheet for Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies at **www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges**

Example question paper

SQA will be publishing an example question paper for this Course. This will demonstrate how existing past paper questions or items have been amended and adapted for use as support for Course assessment preparation. This will provide an additional support for centres, alongside the specimen question paper previously published and the guidance on the use of past papers document.

Support and guidance

Clarification has been sought with regards to the following issues:

World Religion

The RMPS National 5 and new Higher Course Assessment Specifications (CAS) currently state that learners should use:

'Sources: examples of relevant sources of authority which inform the beliefs and practices.'

Centres should be aware that this does not require learners to learn specific sources for each religious belief and practice, and as a result, questions in the exam will be open in nature.

Credit will be given for appropriate and relevant sources used but questions will not ask about them directly. As a result the RMPS National 5 specimen question paper will be updated during the next review.

Morality and Belief

Centres presenting candidates for Higher RMPS will be aware of the mandatory and advisory documents published on SQA's website.

We have become aware that the statement in the Course Assessment Specification relating to Morality and Belief — 'learners will be required to apply at least one key perspective on moral decision making' — is ambiguous. The intention was that question papers would normally sample from specified perspectives, however this is not clear. Furthermore, where this type of question is asked it will be generic in nature, eg candidates will be asked to apply the key moral perspective to Religion and Justice in general and not to the specific bullet pointed aspects of the Course.

In order not to disadvantage candidates in this first year of the new qualification, we are taking the following steps:

- ◆ The Morality and Belief section of the 2015 question paper will not specify a given key perspective that candidates must apply. They will be able to apply any relevant key perspective in their answer.
- ◆ The Higher Exemplar Paper and Guidance Document will include clarification of this point, alongside further examples of questions as they will appear in future years.

It is our intention to exemplify the Course Assessment in this way to help centres understand how to approach this part of the Course and to avoid over-assessment of candidates in future years.

Moral relativism has attracted a significant number of queries from centres. Further guidance and support will be provided ahead of session 2015–16.

Finalised Marking Instructions for the 2014 National 5 RMPS question paper have been published on the relevant subject pages of SQA's website.

Guidance on performance in external Course assessments and evidence generated for internal assessment is published annually. This includes Course Reports, External Assessment Reports and Verification Key Messages, all of which are available via the relevant subject pages of SQA's website. Internal Assessment Reports will not be published for the new National Courses.

Staff news

Subject Implementation Managers for RMPS (David Jack and David Ralston) have been appointed to support the delivery of the new qualifications. If you would like to get in touch with either, in the first instance please contact the Customer Support Team.

The Qualifications Manager for RMPS is Elaine McFadyen and the Qualifications Officer is Lynne McCallum.

Looking ahead to 2014–15

SQA would like to express gratitude and extend thanks to all those who have undertaken duties in session 2013–14. The work that all the teams carry out is appreciated and SQA looks forward to continuing work with them during session 2014–15.

Please note that the final exams for the following subjects will take place during the 2015 diet:

- ◆ C265 10 RMPS Intermediate 1
- ◆ C265 11 RMPS Intermediate 2
- ◆ C265 12 RMPS Higher

Recruitment opportunities

SQA is currently in the process of recruiting for a number of vacancies looking to be filled between now and February 2015. Vacancies include new and replacement appointments.

For more information, please visit [CfE - Appointee Vacancies](#).

SQA Markers

SQA welcomes applications from teachers/lecturers to mark RMPS question papers and assignments at all levels.

If teachers or lecturers are interested in becoming a Marker in RMPS, information and application forms are available on the Appointee Management section of SQA's website. To become a Marker, a minimum of two years' RMPS teaching experience is required. In a number of subject areas there have been 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.

For more information, please visit SQA's [Marker Information](#) web page.

Understanding Standards

Throughout session 2014–15, SQA will be publishing a range of Understanding Standards materials for both Unit and Course assessment. These materials will include candidate evidence with commentaries and can be used by centres for training and bench-marking purposes. Understanding Standards events for Unit assessment will also be held, where Nominees will share knowledge of Unit assessment with their colleagues. In addition, Understanding Standards events for Course assessment for National 5 will take place, which will be open to all subject specialists. The Events for RMPS will be held on 6 February 2015 in Glasgow and 7 February 2015 in Edinburgh. To book a place, please visit [Understanding Standards — Events](#).

Further information will follow in SQA's weekly and monthly centre updates.
