

Our ref: TS/RMPS

23 November 2007

To: SQA Co-ordinator (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
Note — update/information only

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Dear Colleague

**National Qualifications in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies**

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (RMPS).

**Diet 2007**

The Principal Assessor and Senior Verifier reports for diet 2007 can now be found on SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)). These include:

- ◆ Principal Assessor report Intermediate 1
- ◆ Principal Assessor report Intermediate 2
- ◆ Principal Assessor report Higher
- ◆ Principal Assessor report Advanced Higher
- ◆ Principal Assessor report Standard Grade
- ◆ Senior Verifier report National Qualification Units

**Appeals**

The procedures for stage 1 and 2 appeals were completed during September and October. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Generating Evidence Requirements* (BA0992, June 2007)

We have recently updated the *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (BA0992, June 2007) document and this is now available on our website. A hard-copy is being issued to every centre. In particular, the document clarifies subject-specific requirements as well as guidance on the general principles for generating estimates and submitting appeals.

When generating estimates and compiling evidence for absentee consideration and appeals, you should also refer to:

- ◆ Course Arrangements documents, which include Course grade descriptions
- ◆ Course assessment specifications
- ◆ SQA question papers, including specimen question papers
- ◆ SQA marking instructions
- ◆ Principal Assessor reports, which include information on grade boundaries
- ◆ exemplification materials
- ◆ any other relevant information (eg Course reports, subject update letters)

These materials, and more, are also available on the subject pages of our website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted for appeals this year were:

- ◆ wrong or incomplete marking schemes
- ◆ evidence did not cover the complete Course
- ◆ prelim questions were drawn from too few sources
- ◆ security of prelim papers compromised
- ◆ the use of a commercially produced question paper or one produced by another centre without checking the validity of the paper
- ◆ where NABs were used the KU/AE balance was not adjusted or questions were not adapted
- ◆ the KU/AE balance clearly laid out in the Course assessment specifications and the specimen question paper was not adhered to

Centres should note that the above problems will disadvantage candidates and staff are encouraged to read the Principal Assessor reports.

The document *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (BA0992, June 2007) referred to above clarifies what evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper based Courses.

As regards **Standard Grade appeals**, please note the following clarification:

Prelims should not contain whole sections lifted from only one past paper, eg in the Christianity section, questions 1 and 2 should come from different past papers. Where a whole section is lifted from one past paper, the prelim will be deemed unreliable and the submitted evidence invalid.

### **Marking instructions**

The question papers and finalised marking instructions for Course assessments at each level are posted on the RMPS web page.

## **RMPS Courses**

Results at Higher this session were extremely pleasing. The Understanding Standards seminars, familiarity with the revised Course and a revised approach to marking all combined to ensure that we were able to move to *a priori* grade boundaries.

Results at both Intermediate 1 and 2 continue to appear disappointing. One of the main reasons for this is multiple entries from some centres where candidates are completing the Course in core RE time. It is not unusual in these cases for a significant number of candidate scripts to be returned either blank or to have complete questions missing. This is also an issue in Standard Grade. Each of the Principal Assessor reports makes reference to this issue.

When Courses have been revised, SQA policy is to monitor results and staff comments and to review within a three–five year period. With this in view a small focus group of teachers will be set up to discuss issues that have been raised. It is not expected that any major amendments to the Courses will result from this review but there may perhaps be some minor adjustments to content. One major issue that has been raised relates to the *Morality in the Modern World* Unit. Many argue that the major moral issue in the world today is global warming/sustainability/climate change and that this should be an option in this Unit. If this is introduced then one of the current options will have to be deleted. Whatever decision is taken centres will be notified well in advance of implementation.

Any amendments made will be implemented in August 2009 with the first diet in 2010.

## **Advanced Higher**

The Advanced Higher Course is now due for review following the review of Courses at the other levels. A Design Team has been set up to look at bringing content up-to-date and to making some changes in the exam structure. It is not anticipated that there will be major change and it is highly likely that the Personal Research Unit and the dissertation will remain untouched.

As with Courses at the other levels, any amendments made will be implemented in August 2009 with the first diet in 2010.

## **Assessment Panel**

The RMPS Assessment Panel continues to meet twice a year to look at issues arising in the subject. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through Panel members or via SQA officers.

## **Becoming a Marker**

Each year the number of entries for RMPS Courses is increasing. If you are interested in becoming a Marker in RMPS, please e-mail [markers@sqa.org.uk](mailto:markers@sqa.org.uk) or call our Marker Helpline (0131-561 6825) and we will send a form to you. To become a Marker, we normally ask that you are in your third year of teaching the Course. We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. The RMPS Courses are centrally marked — this entails the Marker marking scripts over one

extended period in the same venue. In a number of subject areas we have had recent 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.

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: [tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk](mailto:tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Stannage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tom Stannage  
Qualifications Manager  
NQ Social Sciences and Care