



Higher
Course
Specification



Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course Specification (C764 76)

Valid from August 2014

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Course outline

Course title: Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

SCQF: level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C764 76

Mandatory Units

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| H263 76 World Religion (Higher) | 6 SCQF credit points |
| H264 76 Morality and Belief (Higher) | 6 SCQF credit points |
| H265 76 Religious and Philosophical Questions (Higher) | 6 SCQF credit points |

Course assessment **6 SCQF credit points**

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following, or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 5 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or relevant component Units

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies or its Units
- ◆ further study, employment and/or training

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Course Support Notes* and the *Course Assessment Specification*.

Rationale

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

The Course contributes to learners' understanding of the society in which they live and work by helping them to learn about, and from, religious beliefs, non-religious viewpoints, and personal experience.

Through the Course, learners are enabled to develop the four capacities. The Course will do this by developing knowledge, understanding and skills, developing understanding of human beliefs, values and behaviour, and examining how religion, morality and philosophy can help people find meaning and purpose in life.

In developing these four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence, the Course will also provide opportunities for learners to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. These include literacy, personal learning and thinking skills. Developing understanding and respect for different views can develop a sense of responsible citizenship.

This Course allows learners to develop values and beliefs and learn to express these. This will allow learners to make informed moral decisions. The Course encourages learners to develop an understanding and respect for different beliefs, values and viewpoints, and to put their values or beliefs into action in ways which benefit others.

Purpose and aims of the Course

The purpose of this Course is to develop knowledge and understanding of religious, moral and philosophical issues that affect the world today. Religious and non-religious perspectives will be included. The Course will explore the questions they raise and the solutions or approaches they offer. Learners will have opportunities to reflect on these and on their own experience and views. This will be achieved through successful study of the Course Units.

The Course will require learners to study a world religion in detail, understand contemporary moral issues and responses, and study key aspects of religious and philosophical questions.

The Course will help learners develop an understanding of religious, moral and philosophical issues of relevance in the world today. Learners will develop skills which are transferable to other areas of study and which they will use in everyday life.

The main aims of the Course are to enable learners to develop:

- ◆ the ability to critically analyse, reflect on and express reasoned views about religious, moral and philosophical questions and their impact
- ◆ a range of skills including investigating religious, moral and philosophical questions and responses, critical analysis, evaluation, and the ability to express detailed, reasoned and well-structured views
- ◆ in-depth factual and abstract knowledge and understanding of beliefs, practices and sources related to world religions
- ◆ in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of religious, moral and philosophical questions and responses to them

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

This Course is appropriate for a wide range of learners, including those who wish to achieve a greater understanding of religion and its place in society, those who want to learn more about the traditions, beliefs and values of their own religion, and those who wish to progress to more specialised study, further education, training or employment.

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre.

Through the successful completion of this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills including investigating and expressing detailed, reasoned and well-structured views about religious, moral and philosophical topics or issues; interpreting and explaining sources related to world religions; enquiring into and evaluating contemporary moral questions and responses; and critically analysing religious and philosophical questions and responses.

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Units and Courses are offered from SCQF level 3 to SCQF level 7. Vertical progression is possible through the levels of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies qualifications.

This Course provides an entry qualification for further and higher education. The Course is a preparation for a diverse range of occupations and careers.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

This Course develops a range of cognitive skills. It encourages active learning in the process of investigating religious, moral and philosophical topics or issues. Learners need to develop and apply relevant knowledge and understanding. Learners will learn to express viewpoints and will have the opportunity to reflect on and articulate their personal faith or values. Through the Course as a whole, learners will consider the beliefs, values or viewpoints of more than one religion.

By undertaking this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills including investigating and expressing detailed, reasoned and well-structured views about religious, moral and philosophical topics or issues; interpreting and explaining sources related to world religions; enquiring into and evaluating contemporary moral questions and responses; and critically analysing religious and philosophical questions and responses.

The skills listed above will be developed and applied over a range of religious, moral and philosophical contexts in the following Units. Each Unit also offers opportunities for learners to focus on particular skills.

The Course has three mandatory Units. Within each Unit there is a considerable degree of flexibility in the topics which can be studied, to allow personalisation and choice.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

World Religion (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop skills to interpret and comment on the meaning and context of sources related to the religion selected for study. They will develop in-depth factual and abstract knowledge and understanding of the impact and significance of religion today through studying some key beliefs, practices and sources found within one of the world's six major religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism) and the contribution these make to the lives of followers.

Morality and Belief (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop skills to evaluate and express detailed, reasoned and well-structured views about contemporary moral questions and responses. They will develop in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of contemporary moral questions and religious and non-religious responses. The range of contexts for study will be flexible to allow for personalisation and choice. Religious viewpoints studied must be from one of the world's six major religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism).

Religious and Philosophical Questions (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop skills to critically analyse religious and philosophical questions and responses. They will develop in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of these. The range of contexts for study will be flexible to allow for personalisation and choice. Religious viewpoints studied must be from one of the world's six major religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism).

Conditions of award

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on the assessment of the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course is given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section.

This covers:

- ◆ researching, analysing, evaluating and synthesising information to draw detailed, reasoned and well-structured conclusions and present findings about factual and theoretical elements of religious, moral and philosophical topics or issues, identifying and responding to different ideas and viewpoints
- ◆ interpreting the meaning and context of sources related to world religions, in detail and explaining relevant abstract ideas
- ◆ evaluating and expressing reasoned and well-structured views about contemporary moral and religious and philosophical questions and responses, in detail and explaining relevant theoretical ideas
- ◆ critically analysing and explaining contemporary moral and religious and philosophical questions, in detail and explaining relevant theoretical ideas
- ◆ in-depth factual and abstract knowledge and understanding of the significance and impact of religion today through explaining some key beliefs, practices and sources found within one of the world's six major religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism) and the contribution these make to the lives of followers
- ◆ in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of contemporary moral questions and responses
- ◆ in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of religious and philosophical questions and responses

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

Assessment

Information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Assessment Specification* which provides full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the Unit Specification.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

World Religion (Higher)

The learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ the ability to interpret and comment on the meaning and context of a source related to the religion selected for study and its impact on the lives of followers, in detail and with reference to relevant abstract ideas
- ◆ in-depth factual and abstract knowledge and understanding of the significance and impact of religious beliefs, practices and sources

Morality and Belief (Higher)

The learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ the ability to evaluate and express detailed, reasoned and well-structured views about contemporary moral questions and strengths and weaknesses of responses, with reference to relevant theoretical or abstract ideas
- ◆ in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of contemporary moral questions and responses

Religious and Philosophical Questions (Higher)

The learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ the ability to critically analyse a religious and philosophical question and responses, in detail and with reference to relevant theoretical or abstract ideas
- ◆ in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a religious and philosophical question and responses to it

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)¹. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes

¹ Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster>

and aims of the Course, as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

Learners will draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have learned during the Course. This will be assessed by a combination of a [question paper](#)² and an [assignment](#)³.

The question paper will require demonstration of a breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding from across the Course. The assignment will require learners to draw on, extend and apply their knowledge and skills and will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

² Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html

³ See link above for definition

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities

1 Literacy

1.1 Reading

1.2 Writing

3 Health and wellbeing

3.1 Personal learning

4 Employability

4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and Evaluating

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

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History of changes to National Course Specification

| Course details | Version | Description of change | Authorised by | Date |
|----------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| | 1.1 | Minor amendment to Assessment Standards outlined on p7: 'explaining relevant abstract or theoretical ideas' changed to 'reference to relevant abstract or theoretical ideas'. | Qualifications Development Manager | April 2014 |
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