



**RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND
PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES**
Advanced Higher

Second edition — published August 2010

NOTE OF CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS SECOND EDITION PUBLISHED AUGUST 2010

COURSE TITLE: Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

COURSE NUMBER: C265 13

National Course Specification

Course Details:

Additional information has been added to provide clarity to centres/ candidates on dissertation topics.

There has been an amendment to the length of the dissertation: it is now recommended that the dissertation should be approximately 4,000 words in length.

National Unit Specification

F5A8 13 Personal Research

Minor amends to page 30 to reflect the changes implemented in the National Course Specification



National Course Specification

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

COURSE CODE C265 13

COURSE STRUCTURE

This Course comprises the two mandatory Units plus one of the optional Units.

Mandatory Units

F5A6 13	<i>Philosophy of Religion (AH)</i>	1 credit (40 hours)
F5A8 13	<i>Personal Research (AH)</i>	1 credit (40 hours)

Optional Units

F5AH 13	<i>Religious Experience (AH)</i>	1 credit (40 hours)
F5AM 13	<i>Medical Ethics (AH)</i>	1 credit (40 hours)

In common with all Courses, this Course includes a further 40 hours over and above the 120 hours for component Units. This is for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning and preparation for external assessment. This time is an important element of the Course and advice on its use is included in the Course details section.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have completed a Course or Units where appropriate:

- ◆ in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies at Higher level
- ◆ in a social subject at an equivalent level

PROGRESSION

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ further or higher education Courses in Religion or Philosophy
- ◆ training or employment

Administrative Information

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National Course Specification: (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

The Advanced Higher Course in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies is allocated 32 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*.

**SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in the Course.

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of each Unit Specification.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

RATIONALE

The rationale and aims of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies at Advanced Higher arise from the rationale and aims of religious education as set out in Bulletin 2, *Curriculum Guidelines for Religious Education* (SCDS 1981), and from the Howie Committee's report, *Upper Secondary Education in Scotland* (1992), which made proposals for the inclusion of elements of philosophy for candidates in upper secondary and further education.

Religion

Candidates will investigate the nature and scope of religion and explore how the search for meaning, value and purpose has expressed itself in a range of historical and religious traditions. Developing the skills of analysis and evaluation of complex concepts and issues forms an integral part of this exploration.

Morality

Candidates will investigate the nature and scope of morality and explore how the search for meaning, value and purpose is expressed in the application of moral principles to contemporary bioethical issues. Developing the skills involved in making complex moral decisions forms an integral part of the exploration within the context of the nature and quality of human life.

Philosophy

Candidates will investigate the nature and scope of philosophy as it arises out of the religious and moral domains and explore how the search for meaning, value and purpose has expressed itself in a range of philosophical points of view. Developing the skills involved in evaluating evidence, presenting arguments and justifying conclusions forms an integral part of the exploration.

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies at Advanced Higher deals with the interrelationship of religious beliefs, ethical issues and philosophical challenges within religion and morality. The ability to analyse and evaluate the relative merits of various religious, moral and philosophical perspectives requires a knowledge and understanding of primary and secondary sources, traditional arguments and contemporary points of view, both religious and secular. In addition, an investigative element provides candidates with the opportunity for a thorough enquiry into a religious, moral or philosophical issue.

Candidates will have opportunities to:

- ◆ extend and develop their knowledge and understanding of aspects of religion, morality and philosophy
- ◆ respond to certain religious, moral and philosophical questions through a process of enquiry, debate, analysis and evaluation, particularly in relation to the weighing up of detailed evidence, developing complex arguments and presenting balanced and coherent conclusions
- ◆ complete a dissertation on an issue which will enable them to demonstrate planning, organising and investigating skills, particularly in the use of primary and secondary sources, and evaluate the aims and objectives of their investigation
- ◆ continue to reflect upon their own life experiences, and develop their personal beliefs and values

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

Candidates who undertake Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies should develop their knowledge and understanding of complex religious, moral and philosophical concepts and language. They should also consider issues and viewpoints on religious and other stances for living in the modern world. By studying these aspects, candidates also develop the skills of analysis, evaluation and the presentation of a coherent summary of all the evidence. In the investigative aspect of the Course, candidates develop planning, personal research, analytical and evaluative skills in an increasingly sophisticated way and present detailed information, carefully considered judgements and well supported conclusions using an extensive range of sources.

Candidates are given the opportunity to reflect upon their own experiences, beliefs and values and are encouraged to develop a sympathetic attitude towards the beliefs, values and attitudes of others. An important aim of the Course for candidates is their personal engagement with a range of complex concepts and issues which advances the development of their own beliefs and values and contributes significantly to their personal and social development.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

COURSE CONTENT

The component Units of the Course require candidates to attain a certain level of knowledge and understanding, and the ability to analyse and evaluate a range of complex concepts and issues. In undertaking the Course, candidates have an opportunity to develop these abilities further, deepening knowledge and understanding, developing critical thinking and integrating knowledge and skills acquired across the component Units. The dissertation provides an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and skills as they explore a chosen issue in considerable depth and as they plan, investigate sources, organise data, analyse and evaluate findings and report on the issue concerned.

In the investigating and planning phase of the dissertation, candidates will be required to gather information and analyse and evaluate it in the light of the evidence they have assembled. In the reviewing and evaluating phase of the dissertation, candidates will assess attainment of the original aims and objectives, identifying both achievements and failures which they experienced in their investigation. Thus the dissertation acts as a reinforcement of the application of those very skills required by the Course assessment.

Philosophy of Religion (40 hours)

In this mandatory Unit, candidates will explore in depth the ongoing debate over the existence or non-existence of God and the consequences this has for our perception of the origin and purpose of the universe and our place within it. They will analyse and evaluate the arguments and counter-arguments in relation to three areas of study:

1 Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God

Aquinas' arguments

- ◆ The Unmoved Mover
- ◆ The Uncaused Causer
- ◆ Possibility and Necessity

Developments of the criticism Of Aquinas' Arguments

Other Cosmological Arguments

How Successful Are The Arguments?

Have modern Cosmological Arguments destroyed the traditional argument?

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

2 The Design Argument for the Existence of God

Use of Analogy — strengths and weaknesses

- ◆ Key premise of Aquinas' argument is the claim that things that lack intelligence cannot move towards their end unless they are directed by someone with knowledge and intelligence
- ◆ Presence of suffering and evil

Evolution

Anthropic Principle

3 Atheism

Candidates are required to study the grounds for atheism and the criticisms of atheistic stances. Centres should note that the atheistic beliefs described below should be studied rather than treating atheistic beliefs as resting on counter-arguments to the Cosmological and Teleological arguments studied elsewhere in the Unit.

Understanding atheism

What is Atheism?

- ◆ Ancient and modern arguments

Presumption of atheism

Coherence of the Concept of God

- ◆ External coherence
- ◆ Internal coherence

Personal Research (40 hours)

In this mandatory Unit, candidates will carry out independent research on an issue chosen from within the content of the Advanced Higher Course. They will develop the investigative skills of planning, organising, analysis, evaluation and presentation of complex concepts and issues. Candidates will submit a detailed proposal for a dissertation, based on their personal research.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

Religious Experience (40 hours)

In this optional Unit candidates will explore the issues within three areas of study:

1 Nature of Religious Experience

- ◆ Main features of religious experience, eg William James, Rudolph Otto
- ◆ Religious experience today, eg Sir Alister Hardy Research Centre, Richard Swinburne

2 Religious Experience from a Faith Perspective

- ◆ Mystical experience, eg St Theresa of Avila, Jacob Boehme, Simone Weil
- ◆ Personal conversion, eg St Paul, St Ignatius of Loyola, C S Lewis

3 Secular Perspectives on Religious Experience

- ◆ Psychological, eg Feuerbach, Freud
- ◆ Sociological, eg Emile Durkheim, Bryan Wilson

Medical Ethics (40 hours)

In this optional Unit candidates will be required to explore the issues within three areas of study:

1 Beginning of life

The treatment and rights of embryos
Abortion

2 Prolongation of life

The procurement of organs
The allocation of organs

3 Ending of life

Palliative care of terminal illness
Euthanasia

Responses to all the issues will involve study of reports, publications and developments in the churches and other organisations (eg British Medical Association, Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, SPUC). It could also involve reference to the writings of individual philosophers and ethicists (eg Peter Singer, Pope John Paul II).

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

ASSESSMENT

To gain the award of the Course, candidates must pass all the Unit assessments as well as the external assessment. External assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

When Units are taken as component parts of a Course, candidates will have the opportunity to achieve at levels beyond that required to attain each of the Unit Outcomes. This attainment may, where appropriate, be recorded and used to contribute towards Course estimates, and to provide evidence for appeals. Additional details are provided, where appropriate, with the exemplar assessment materials.

Unit assessment

Satisfactory evidence of the attainment of all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for each Unit is in the form of written and/or recorded oral responses to structured questions. To maintain reliability and credibility assessment evidence is produced under supervision, ensuring that it is the candidate's own work. The evidence is in the form of a closed-book test with a time limit of one hour.

Further details about Unit assessment for this Course can be found in the NAB materials and in the Unit Specifications.

Details of the instruments for external assessment

The external Course assessment will consist of two parts.

Examination paper

Questions will sample from component Units of the Course. Candidates will be required to answer questions based on the mandatory Unit *Philosophy of Religion* and their optional Unit. For each Unit they will attempt one question from a choice of two. This means that candidates must attempt two questions in this paper which will be two hours in duration. It will attract 60 out of a total of 100 marks.

Dissertation

The dissertation will be based on the investigation undertaken in the *Personal Research* Unit. An approved list of topics is available from the SQA website and candidates must choose a dissertation topic from the approved list. This will be distributed to centres in the spring/summer of the year preceding the submission date and the topics will change each year on a rolling programme. It will be assessed in terms of the critical appraisal of its aims and methodology; the breadth and variety of its sources and references; the quality of its analysis and evaluation of the evidence; and the coherence and clarity of its structure and conclusions. It is recommended that the dissertation should be approximately 4,000 words in length. Where candidates normally use an alternative form of communication, arrangements should be made to enable these candidates to undertake this assessment on an equitable basis. It will attract 40 out of a total of 100 marks.

Further details of the Course assessment are given in the Course Assessment Specification and in the Specimen Question Paper.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

Link between Unit and Course assessment/added value

Individual Unit assessment instruments allow candidates to demonstrate a level of knowledge and understanding of religious, moral and philosophical concepts and issues which is appropriate for attaining a Unit award at Advanced Higher. They also allow candidates to demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate these concepts and issues in a philosophical manner.

When completing the Course assessment candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate the greater level of attainment appropriate for a graded ‘Advanced Higher’ Course award by:

- ◆ demonstrating the ability to answer questions relating to all Units on a single occasion
- ◆ demonstrating the long-term retention of knowledge and skills
- ◆ demonstrating a greater depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding
- ◆ answering questions in which the more complex skills of analysis and evaluation attract a higher proportion of the marks available than those in Unit assessment
- ◆ applying and adapting the skills of analysis and evaluation in a variety of contexts
- ◆ demonstrating the ability to integrate knowledge and skills across the Units

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS AT A AND C

The following grade descriptions are to inform staff and candidates about the standards which apply at Grade 'A' and Grade 'C'.

	'C'	'A'
Knowledge and understanding	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of complex concepts and issues.	Demonstrate in considerable detail comprehensive knowledge and understanding of complex concepts and issues.
	Make selective reference to context sources and their contexts.	Make selective and extensive reference to sources and their contexts.
Analysis	Present a detailed and balanced analysis of complex concepts and issues.	Present a detailed and balanced analysis of complex concepts and issues.
Evaluation	Make considered judgements on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ interpretations of texts ◆ the relative merits of viewpoints 	Make detailed and balanced judgements on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ interpretations of texts ◆ the relative merits of viewpoints
	Present a summary of the evidence with coherent arguments.	Present a balanced summary of the evidence with coherent arguments.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

ESTIMATES AND APPEALS

Estimates

In preparing estimates, evidence must take account of performance across the Course and must be judged against the Grade Descriptions. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

Appeals

Assessment items used to support an appeal should contain all of the following:

- ◆ evidence of long-term retention of knowledge and skills
- ◆ evidence which samples across all Units
- ◆ evidence of the ability to perform more complex tasks than those demanded for Unit assessment
- ◆ evidence of the ability to apply and adapt the skills of analysis and evaluation in a variety of contexts
- ◆ a clear indication that all the above evidence has been gathered under controlled conditions

Many centres may choose to hold a preliminary exam which conforms to the advice given in the Course Assessment Specification. Evidence generated from such a prelim will be of great value when considering appeals. Where a centre does not hold a prelim, the evidence submitted must clearly sample across all areas of the Course, show evidence of long-term retention and the potential to perform more complex tasks than those demanded for Unit assessment. Instruments of assessment used must conform to the guidelines given in the Course Assessment Specification and clearly show a level of attainment in line with the Grade Descriptions for the Course.

Individual NAB items, or their equivalent, do not provide sufficient evidence for estimates and appeals on their own. This is because they:

- ◆ only sample across the content of one Unit
- ◆ do not attract the same proportion of marks for the more complex skills of analysis and evaluation
- ◆ do not require candidates to sample across all Course content on a single occasion

However, evidence gathered from Unit assessment items may contribute to an appeal if this clearly shows a level of attainment in line with elements of the Grade Descriptions for the Course.

Marking schemes which refer to the Grade Descriptions should be included with all evidence submitted in support of an appeal.

The dissertation, which is assessed externally and for which the evidence is produced over a period of time, is likely to represent the candidate's best work. The generation of alternative evidence for a component assessed in this way is likely to be impractical and therefore not mandatory for appeals.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

QUALITY ASSURANCE

All National Courses are subject to external marking and/or verification. Externals Markers, visiting Examiners and Verifiers are trained by SQA to apply national standards.

The Units of all Courses are subject to internal verification and may also be chosen for external verification. This is to ensure that national standards are being applied across all subjects.

Courses may be assessed by a variety of methods. Where marking is undertaken by a trained Marker in their own time, Markers meetings are held to ensure that a consistent standard is applied. The work of all Markers is subject to scrutiny by the Principal Assessor.

To assist centres, External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports are published on SQA's website **www.sqa.org.uk**.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS COURSE

Learning and teaching approaches should be carefully selected to support the development of knowledge and skills, to motivate and to promote critical thinking. Good quality teacher/lecturer exposition should be complemented by opportunities for candidates to investigate, identify and assimilate source material. Structured discussion and debate should be used to develop candidates' critical thinking skills and to formulate supportive arguments. There should also be opportunities to present and justify considered argument. A continual review of candidates' work will be important in developing their skills. For example they might be given feedback on how well they evaluated the relative importance of different sources or how balanced was their analysis of an issue.

Setting the right climate for learning and establishing good relationships will be extremely important. Candidates must be confident that their views will be respected, if not necessarily shared and they, in turn, should be encouraged to listen to and to treat with respect the views of others.

Individual skills should be the particular focus of learning and planned so that formative assessment and necessary intervention can take place. As candidates progress through the Course, individual skills may be rehearsed and consolidated in the production of oral or written evidence. For example, candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of contexts such as interpreting primary sources in depth, and constructing arguments and counter-arguments based on complex issues.

Some staff may see advantages in using frequent assessments that will be helpful in highlighting the various specific skills; others may prefer to use more extended oral and/or written responses which will encourage the integration and extension of those skills. Depending upon the ability and prior experience of the class, a judicious blending of these approaches is recommended. Detailed comments about both the content and structure of their responses will help and encourage candidates to make progress. Candidates should know how to organise a good oral/written response as well as presenting detailed content.

Part of the further 40 hours should be set aside specifically for the extension and integration of skills through class discussion and oral or written responses. For example, it will be important for candidates to produce essays and/or oral presentations of extended length which make it necessary to link and extend these skills. These tasks could perform the dual function of providing evidence for both Unit Outcomes and Course estimates. More specific advice is given in the Unit Specifications.

A summary of the use of the additional 40 hours would comprise:

- ◆ providing additional support and follow up assessment to ensure that all the Outcomes of the component Units have been achieved
- ◆ engaging in discussion and practice in the extended use of the skills in different Units or contexts
- ◆ incorporating oral/written extended responses to further develop the integration and extension of skills and to provide estimate grades
- ◆ allocating time for the dissertation: moving from the investigative phase with its detailed proposal to the implementation stage and completion of the dissertation itself

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

Assessment as an important learning and teaching opportunity

Unit assessment provides a clear indication of whether or not candidates have achieved the minimum standards required to pass an individual Unit. As such, Unit assessment is summative. However, for candidates who require reassessment and/or intend to attempt the External assessment element of the Course, all assessment has a formative value.

In order to make maximum use of assessment, teachers and lecturers need to provide meaningful feedback on all items of Unit and end-of-topic assessments. This feedback should highlight areas where candidates have performed well. It should also highlight areas where candidates need additional development. Homework exercises should also be commented on. Feedback should be elicited after all classroom activities and summing-up comments should be made by the teacher or lecturer. The nature of such feedback will depend on the prior experience of candidates, the range of candidates and the resources available.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for this Course. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

CODE F5A6 13

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

SUMMARY

The Unit seeks to develop understanding and analysis of some complex arguments in the philosophy of religion and to make considered judgements about their significance for religious belief in the contemporary world. This Unit covers two of the most common arguments for the existence of God, the cosmological and the teleological, and encourages candidates to consider both the traditional and more contemporary versions of these arguments. Candidates will also study traditional and contemporary arguments in favour of atheism and that atheism is in itself a positive stance and not simply the negation of theism.

This Unit is not only suitable for candidates who wish to progress to higher education in this subject area but also enables candidates to think critically and to prepare arguments in any area where such skills are required.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of an argument in philosophy of religion.
- 2 Analyse in detail an argument in philosophy of religion.
- 3 Evaluate an argument in philosophy of religion.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have completed a Course or Units where appropriate:

- ◆ in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies at Higher level
- ◆ in a social subject at an equivalent level

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in the Unit.

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate an understanding of an argument in philosophy of religion.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the chosen argument.
- (b) Describe the premises in the chosen argument.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse in detail an argument in philosophy of religion.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain the different stages in the chosen argument.
- (b) Analyse contributions to the various stages in the chosen argument.
- (c) Refer to sources relating to the argument.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate an argument in philosophy of religion.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Assess the validity of the chosen argument.
- (b) Present a coherent conclusion.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required to demonstrate the achievement of all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for this Unit. The evidence will be produced under closed-book supervised conditions within a time limit of one hour. As candidates will develop their knowledge and understanding throughout their study of the Unit it would be appropriate for this to take place towards the end of the Unit. The evidence must cover the following:

- ◆ one argument for either the existence of God or for atheism
- ◆ an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen argument, including a variety of sources
- ◆ an evaluation and conclusion supporting the chosen argument

A suitable assessment will cover one of the areas specified in the appendix to the statement of standards for this Unit.

The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank (NAB) items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

1 Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God

Aquinas' arguments

- ◆ The Unmoved Mover
- ◆ The Uncaused Causer
- ◆ Possibility and Necessity

Developments of the criticism Of Aquinas' Arguments

Other Cosmological Arguments

How Successful Are The Arguments?

Have modern Cosmological Arguments destroyed the traditional argument?

2 The Design Argument for the Existence of God

Use of Analogy — strengths and weaknesses

- ◆ Key premise of Aquinas' argument is the claim that things that lack intelligence cannot move towards their end unless they are directed by someone with knowledge and intelligence
- ◆ Presence of suffering and evil

Evolution

- ◆ Presents an alternative explanation to the Divine Designer as to how design can appear
- ◆ Evolution is a correct explanation but not a complete one

Anthropic Principle

- ◆ Accepts both Darwin's evolutionary process and the existence of God

3 Atheism

Candidates are required to study the grounds for atheism and the criticisms of atheistic stances. Centres should note that the atheistic beliefs described below should be studied rather than treating atheistic beliefs as resting on counter-arguments to the Cosmological and Teleological arguments studied elsewhere in the Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

Understanding atheism

What is Atheism?

- ◆ Ancient and modern arguments

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?

Coherence of the Concept of God

- ◆ Internal coherence — paradoxes:
 - omnipotent?
 - omniscient?
 - all powerful?
- ◆ External coherence:
 - freewill or predestination?
 - issues of suffering and evil
 - is individual well-being God's concern?

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The universe can be thought of and experienced in both religious and non-religious ways. In other words, it is open both to religious and non-religious interpretations. The focus of this Unit is to explore the present state of the debate between these two interpretations, by engaging in a study of two main arguments for the existence of God and of the counter-arguments offered by atheism.

Candidates will be expected to cover all three Outcomes in the Unit. Ideally the elements should be delivered in an integrated way, with learning and teaching drawing on related content from the three Outcomes of the Unit. In other words, a holistic approach will be expected and candidates should be able to refer to the content of all three Outcomes when answering their chosen question.

Learning and teaching approaches should reflect the aims and rationale of the subject. It should be varied and interesting, to encourage enthusiasm for the basic argument and discussion inherent in the nature of the Outcomes. Candidates should be encouraged to compare their own attitudes and values and identify with the stances taken in each Outcome. Working in groups, class discussion, extracts from film and television can all help understanding as well as engendering enthusiasm.

A variety of teaching approaches is recommended and candidates should be given every opportunity to participate in whole-class activity, in small groups, and as individuals. Ideally the approach should be candidate-centred and activity based, but whole-class teaching can play a part in a flexible programme as a means of establishing understanding.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

In this learning and teaching process, it is recommended that teachers/lecturers include a wide range of stimulus materials, invited speakers, visits, paper-based resources and ICT resources. The resources should be accessible, interesting, and manageable for candidates working at this level and should allow them to draw upon and reflect on their own beliefs and values.

It may be helpful for candidates to have a clear notion of targets and to experience ownership of the planned programme. Regular opportunities for formative assessment, consolidation and review should be included in the programme. Opportunity could be given for candidates to:

- ◆ set learning objectives
- ◆ review progress
- ◆ assess and develop existing knowledge
- ◆ seek and receive feedback and support.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout this Unit candidates will have the opportunity to develop the skills of Critical Thinking and both Written and Oral Communication. The Unit content lends itself to critically analysing a number of texts relating to important issues in the philosophy of religion. These issues will be the focus for discussion in the classroom and for writing critical essays in both formative and summative assessment.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

The Evidence Requirements section sets out clearly what must be addressed by candidates and what evidence tutors must look for in an assessment tool. While all areas of content listed in the appendix must be covered only one area need be assessed in the Unit assessment.

An appropriate Instrument of Assessment would be a single closed-book test, lasting no more than one hour, which may contain an essay type question. The assessment should make use of sources used in class teaching.

Evidence should be gathered by means of a single assessment towards the end of the Unit. Care should be taken to ensure sufficient time is allowed for remediation and reassessment, if required.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards: Appendix

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

NB: This appendix forms part of the statement of standards, ie requirements that are mandatory.

1 The Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God

Historical Background

Aquinas' Arguments

Key:

- 1 The Unmoved Mover — motion/question of infinite regress
- 2 The Uncaused Causer — causes/question of infinite regress
- 3 Possibility and Necessity — contingency — coming into existence because something has caused them to happen

Knowledge of:

- 4 Goodness, truth, nobility
- 5 Teleological

Criticism of Aquinas' Arguments

Other Cosmological Arguments

- 1 Sufficient Reason — Hume, Russell
- 2 Beginning Argument

- ◆ Kalam/Craig
- ◆ Big Bang Theory
- ◆ Oscillating Theory
- ◆ Modern scientific arguments

How successful are the Arguments? Have modern Cosmological Arguments destroyed the traditional arguments?

Selection of key figures/areas:

- ◆ Kenny
- ◆ Hume
- ◆ Leibniz
- ◆ Kant
- ◆ Steady State Theory
- ◆ Davies

National Unit Specification: statement of standards: Appendix (cont)

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

2 The Design Argument for the existence of God

Use of Analogy

- ◆ Key premise of Aquinas' argument is the claim that things that lack of intelligence cannot move towards their end unless they are directed by someone with knowledge and intelligence
- ◆ Analogy of the watch designer and God
- ◆ First part of argument is design qua purpose
- ◆ Second part of argument is design qua regularity
- ◆ An unsound analogy
- ◆ Similar effects do not necessarily imply similar causes
- ◆ Analogy makes God more human than divine
- ◆ Analogy leads to a non-moral God
- ◆ Our observations do not support the claim that an intelligent hand must shape the natural world
- ◆ Allows that there is an analogy between artefacts and natural objects but suggests that we need 'transcendental' arguments

Evolution

- ◆ Presents an alternative explanation to the Divine Designer as to how design can appear
- ◆ Random mutation plus the pressures of natural selection is the designer of all living organisms
- ◆ Neo-Darwinist position rejects any design in the world
- ◆ Natural selection gave appearance of design which led to the mistaken belief in a designer
- ◆ Variations in the world were caused by random mistakes in the DNA molecules of a life-form
- ◆ Evolution is a correct explanation but not a complete one
- ◆ Assimilates evolution into the 'machine-making' nature of this mechanical universe

Anthropic Principle

- ◆ Accepts both Darwin's evolutionary process and the existence of God.
- ◆ Human life is only possible because of an extraordinary balance of chemical, thermal and astronomical features which could not have come about by chance.
- ◆ Evolution is part of God's plan for the development of intelligent life.
- ◆ 'There seems to be a conspiracy to fix the conditions.' The laws of physics are so finely tuned that it is impossible or unlikely that they have developed by chance.
- ◆ Had the force of the Big Bang or the strength of gravity been even slightly different the initial conditions necessary for the development of intelligent life would not have occurred.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards: Appendix (cont)

UNIT Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher)

3 Atheism

Presumption of Atheism?

Presumption distinct from assumption:

- ◆ A presumption is adopted to serve a purpose; the presumption of innocence rather than of guilt or of neutrality is adopted because it is thought important to avoid punishing the innocent — more important than ensuring that all guilty people are punished.
- ◆ Some say you should only believe that which has grounds or evidence to avoid believing false things even if this policy means that there will be many true things you won't believe.
- ◆ Those who think that way will hold that unless there are grounds or evidence for God's existing we should presume that there is no God. (Although Flew is not now an atheist he may well think this still).
- ◆ Against this, it is pointed out that many beliefs that we all share, such as the belief that the laws of nature will be tomorrow what they were yesterday, cannot be supported in the required way, and that other respectable-seeming beliefs are in the same boat.

Coherence of the Concept of God:

Internal coherence

- ◆ Can God's Omnipotence be maintained, given the dilemma — whether or not God can create a boulder which God cannot lift?
- ◆ Perhaps God should be said to be Almighty? Or (as some would argue) the conundrum above makes the assumption that God isn't omnipotent in order to (seem to) argue that God can't be omnipotent.
- ◆ What of God's being all-knowing? If God knows our future actions, can they be free — such that God can judge us justly? Is God in time? Does foreknowledge (eg of a clairvoyant, if there is such) exclude freedom?

External coherence

- ◆ Is God's goodness and power compatible with the evils of the world?
- ◆ Freewill Defence arguments.
- ◆ But isn't the individual's good God's concern — and not just that of the 'system'?
- ◆ A loving God rather than Stoicism.



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Personal Research (Advanced Higher)

CODE F5A8 13

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

SUMMARY

The Unit allows candidates to carry out a piece of individual research in which they will demonstrate a high degree of ability to plan, organise, research and prepare a detailed outline proposal for a dissertation.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Investigate and organise a wide range of information relevant to an issue in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies.
- 2 Present a detailed proposal for a dissertation on an issue related to Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have completed a Course or Units where appropriate:

- ◆ in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies at Higher level
- ◆ in a social subject at an equivalent level

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Personal Research (Advanced Higher)

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in the Unit.

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Personal Research (Advanced Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Investigate and organise a wide range of information relevant to an issue in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The issue is identified and its relevance to RMPS is explained.
- (b) A set of aims appropriate to the issue is presented.
- (c) A range of primary and secondary sources are identified and relevant information is selected.

OUTCOME 2

Present a detailed proposal for a dissertation on an issue related to Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies.

Performance Criteria

The proposal for a dissertation satisfies the following criteria:

- (a) It has a clear structure with an introduction, development, and conclusion relevant to the issue.
- (b) It presents in summary form the main features which would underpin the analysis and evaluation of the issue in the extended format of a dissertation.
- (c) It has a wide and varied range of source material which both informs and supports the main features of the issue being investigated.
- (d) The investigative process itself has been evaluated showing awareness of achievement as well as areas for improvement in the investigative task.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence in the form of a report of essay length. The candidate's evidence will be assessed by interview using a checklist based on the criteria. The evidence must satisfy both Outcomes. Within each Outcome, the evidence must demonstrate or imply satisfaction of all the Performance Criteria.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Personal Research (Advanced Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

In this Unit, candidates will carry out an independent piece of research on an issue chosen from within the content of the Advanced Higher Course. They will develop to a high degree, the investigative skills of planning, research, analysis, evaluation and presentation.

This Unit requires candidates to submit a proposal for a dissertation based on an investigation into an issue. For candidates taking the Unit as part of an Advanced Higher course, this investigation will be used as the basis for the production of a dissertation which forms part of the Course assessment. An approved list of topics is available from the SQA website and candidates must choose a dissertation topic from the approved list. However, successful completion of the Unit assessment would require the candidates to submit the detailed proposal for the dissertation rather than the dissertation itself. An essential aspect of this Unit relates to the processes involved in planning, organising, reviewing and evaluating an investigative task which might lead to a dissertation.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

In the first Outcome candidates must identify an issue and explain why it is relevant to Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies. They also need to identify a range of sources and select relevant information.

In Outcome 2, the candidates are required to prepare a report which contains a proposal for a dissertation. The investigative phase will have been completed and they should be far advanced into the preparation for submitting a detailed proposal. The information might be in summary form, but there must be sufficient detail to satisfy a checklist of requirements. The criteria might be as follows:

- ◆ the aims and objectives of the proposed investigation are specified
- ◆ a wide range and variety of sources has been identified
- ◆ the information gathered is organised under a series of subheadings showing the progression of the argument
- ◆ the information shows evidence of reference to complex sources and an awareness of the varying status of these sources
- ◆ the information is assembled so that the main features of the issue are carefully analysed in a systematic and balanced way
- ◆ the proposal has a clear structure with an introduction, development, and conclusion relevant to the issue
- ◆ the investigative process itself is evaluated with reference to the satisfactory attainment of its original aims and objectives: recognition of achievement as well as any need for improvement has been noted
- ◆ a dissertation topic has been taken from the list provided by SQA and an appropriate and relevant approach has been taken

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Personal Research (Advanced Higher)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout this Unit candidates will have the opportunity to develop the skills of Critical Thinking and both Written and Oral Communication. The Unit content lends itself to critically analysing a number of texts relating to important issues in either the philosophy of religion or in medical ethics. These issues will be the focus for research and for analysing and evaluating sources and resources in the development of their dissertation.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

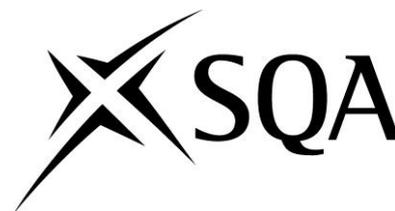
Wherever possible, teaching staff should use assessment judiciously and efficiently to provide evidence of the achievement of all the learning Outcomes in the Units. A balance must be struck between the need both for some targeted assessment of specific knowledge and skills and for assessment instruments which focus on more than one learning Outcome. This allows for a more integrated approach to skills, while a more extended reference to information and viewpoints is demonstrated.

The evidence can be gathered during and/or at the end of the Unit and must be completed under controlled conditions, ie under supervision without collaboration and the assistance of notes or teacher/lecturer advice. The evidence should be based on assessments relating to each of the Outcomes with equal weighting being given to each Outcome.

The marking scheme would reflect the standard embodied in the Performance Criteria. This would allow the evidence to be considered as a whole. The level of attainment required for successful completion of the Unit should represent satisfactory attainment of the Outcomes and, by inference, satisfactory coverage of all the Performance Criteria.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

CODE F5AH 13

SUMMARY

The Unit seeks to develop understanding and analysis of religious experience and to make considered judgements about its relevance and validity in today's world.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate a detailed understanding of religious experience.
- 2 Analyse in detail issues relating to religious experience.
- 3 Evaluate issues relating to religious experience.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Higher)
- ◆ a social subject at Higher level

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in the Unit.

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate a detailed understanding of religious experience.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Provide a detailed explanation of aspects of religious experience.
- (b) Refer to sources to support this explanation.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse in detail issues relating to religious experience.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain different viewpoints on the issues.
- (b) Apply a range of sources.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate issues relating to religious experience.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Assess the relevance or validity of the evidence and/or viewpoints.
- (b) Present a coherent and balanced conclusion.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required to demonstrate the achievement of all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for this Unit. The evidence will be produced under closed-book supervised conditions within a time limit of one hour. As candidates will develop their knowledge and understanding throughout their study of the Unit it would be appropriate for this to take place towards the end of the Unit. The evidence must cover the following:

- ◆ one argument for either the existence of God or for atheism
- ◆ an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen argument, including a variety of sources
- ◆ an evaluation and conclusion supporting the chosen argument

The evidence must cover two out of the three areas.

A suitable assessment will cover one of the areas specified in the appendix to the statement of standards for this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank (NAB) items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Fuller detail of the content to be covered in this Unit is given in the appendix to the statement of standards at the end of this Unit. This indicates the detail that should be covered in teaching and what may be included in the external assessment.

In this optional Unit candidates will explore the issues within three areas of study:

Nature of Religious Experience

- ◆ Main features of religious experience, eg William James, Rudolph Otto
- ◆ Religious experience today, eg Sir Alister Hardy Research Centre, Richard Swinburne
- ◆ The study of religious experience — assumptions and methodologies

Religious experiences can be understood differently, and candidates will need to be able to analyse various understandings and explain various points of view. This means understanding, first of all, what is meant by religious experience.

Religious Experience from a Faith Perspective

- ◆ Mystical experience, eg St Theresa of Avila, Jacob Boehme, Simone Weil
- ◆ Personal conversion, eg St Paul, St Ignatius of Loyola, C S Lewis

Secondly, you need to examine a range of different religious experiences, and their interpretation, from within religious traditions themselves. Just because a religious experience is of central importance to some (perhaps many) members of a religious tradition, for example, does not necessarily mean that all will see it as central. A particular focus will be on conversion and mysticism.

Secular Perspectives on Religious Experience

- ◆ Psychological, eg Feuerbach, Freud
- ◆ Sociological, eg Emile Durkheim, Bryan Wilson
- ◆ Physiological, eg W. Penfield, VS Ramachandran, Dr Persinger

Religious experience is widespread in human culture and has been, and still is, experienced at different levels of intensity and in a variety of different ways. Many people who have undergone such experiences have regarded them as life changing and these have been very significant in the development and growth of all religions. Such experiences are mainly individual but can also be communal; they can be experienced as a gradual awakening or as a sudden conversion. Often, those who claim to have had them have subsequently interpreted their life as being lived in the presence of God/the Divine/the Real.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

While surveys show religious experience to be a widespread phenomenon, alternative ‘non-religious’ explanations have been posed for these experiences based on psychological and sociological factors. These secular perspectives will also be considered.

To be secular means to be concerned with this world only. Some Psychologists, Sociologists and Philosophers claim to explain religious experience in purely natural terms. They deny that God, the divine, or the supernatural is required to make sense of it. What alternative theories do they propose? Are they right?

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

In Outcome 1, candidates must be able to provide a detailed explanation of the aspects of religious experience covered in each of the areas of study and support their explanations by referring to appropriate sources. It is not always necessary to include a direct quotation but sources should be accurately and broadly cited, and clearly related to the explanation of the argument.

In Outcome 2, candidates are encouraged to broaden their understanding of the nature of religious experience by analysing some of the issues arising from their study. They should explain different viewpoints on the issues and illustrate them by reference to sources.

In the final Outcome, candidates are asked to evaluate issues by assessing the relevance or validity of the evidence or viewpoints employed. In the case of specific religious experiences this might be in relation to a particular religious tradition.

The evaluation will also take account of alternative explanations for religious experiences, and these should focus around the extent to which they can act as verification of the truths of the selected tradition’s beliefs and values. From this more secular perspective, these phenomena will be evaluated in ways which relate more to the natural than to the supernatural. Psychological and sociological insights will lend breadth and balance to this discussion.

Candidates should seek to present a coherent and balanced conclusion from this evaluation.

The following are some suggested issues that candidates should consider:

Nature of Religious Experience

Essential Issues

- ◆ How are religious experiences studied and classified?
- ◆ What, if anything, makes a religious experience religious?
- ◆ How important is religious experience for humanity?
- ◆ How useful or relevant or legitimate is its study?
- ◆ 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?

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

Religious Experience from a Faith perspective

Essential Issues

- ◆ Is conversion a one-off experience for someone, or else an ongoing one?
- ◆ How do converts explain their conversion experience?
- ◆ Is conversion something confined to religion?
- ◆ To what extent is conversion a requirement for a religion?
- ◆ How important is mysticism within religion?
- ◆ Is it a cause, or an effect of religious faith?
- ◆ Is it an exclusively religious phenomenon?
- ◆ Do such experiences prove the existence of God?

Secular Perspectives on Religious Experience

Essential Issues

- ◆ How convincing are secular interpretations of religious experience?
- ◆ To what extent are secular interpretations of religious experience scientific?
- ◆ In what ways might secular theories be tested or demonstrated?
- ◆ Do secular interpretations taken together make a compelling, cumulative case against religious experience being ‘true’?
- ◆ Does the identification of a physiological basis for religious experience negate its religious or *truth* value?

Suggestions for Case Studies

- ◆ Toronto blessing
- ◆ The effect of fundamentalist experiences in all religions and their effect on society
- ◆ Medjugorje
- ◆ Malcolm X

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

While there is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit, there are opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills. Throughout the Unit candidates are encouraged to carry out research and to analyse and evaluate the evidence they gather. They must also carry out a piece of extended writing. These activities contribute to the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Problem Solving*.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

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National Unit Specification: statement of standards: Appendix

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

NB: This appendix is part of the statement of standards, ie requirements that are mandatory.

Nature of Religious Experience

- 1 Understanding the meaning of key terms: spiritual, sacred, numinous, mystical, conversion experiences. Key features of Religious Experience and subjectivity.
- 2 William James:
 - ◆ The sick soul
 - ◆ Conversion
 - ◆ Saintliness
 - ◆ Practical consequences (asceticism, strength of soul, purity, charity)
 - ◆ Mysticism
 - ◆ Religious experience and belief in God
- 3 Rudolf Otto:
 - ◆ Numinous consciousness: mysterium tremendum, mysterium fascinans
- 4 Alister Hardy:
 - ◆ Research Centre
 - ◆ Key findings
- 5 Richard Swinburne:
 - ◆ Principle of credulity

Religious Experience from a Faith Perspective

- 1 Mystical experiences
- 2 St Teresa of Avilla and Simone Weil:
 - ◆ Early Life
 - ◆ Mystical Experiences
 - ◆ Later Life
 - ◆ Writings
- 3 Personal Conversion Experiences from a faith perspective:
St Paul and C.S.Lewis
 - ◆ Early Life
 - ◆ Conversion Experience
 - ◆ Later Life
 - ◆ Writings
- 4 The common understanding of conversion within the Christian tradition.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards: Appendix (cont)

UNIT Religious Experience (Advanced Higher)

Secular Perspectives on Religious Experience

- 1 Sigmund Freud:
 - ◆ Early experiences
 - ◆ Religion as a neurosis
 - ◆ Conversion and mysticism

- 2 Carl Jung:
 - ◆ Early experiences
 - ◆ Influence of Buddhism
 - ◆ The importance of the unconscious mind

- 3 Sociological Perspectives of Religious Experience:
 - ◆ Ideology
 - ◆ Human Behaviour
 - ◆ The meaning of existence

- 4 Emile Durkheim:
 - ◆ Religious experience and social well-being
 - ◆ Conversion

- 5 Bryan Wilson:
 - ◆ Secularisation
 - ◆ New religious movements

The contribution to 20th and 21st century thinking should be applied to all of the above.



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

CODE F5AM 13

COURSE Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit seeks to develop understanding, analysis and evaluation of issues within medical ethics. It should enable candidates to critically reflect on complex issues which involve aspects of medical, legal and ethical understanding. Candidates will be able to evaluate important medical developments and assess these in the light of relevant laws applicable in the UK and elsewhere. Through this, candidates will develop a detailed understanding of how issues relating to medical ethics are treated by contemporary society. In addition, candidates will refer to the recommendations of interested public bodies in these complex areas and relate these to the current legal position.

Throughout this Unit candidates will develop a sound understanding of medical and legal issues as well as religious and ethical viewpoints. This will mean that they should develop a rounded understanding of the nature of ethical argument, how sources are used, and what constitutes a valid argument.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the religious and ethical issues within medical ethics.
- 2 Analyse in detail the religious and ethical issues within medical ethics.
- 3 Evaluate the religious and ethical issues within medical ethics.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have completed a Course or Units where appropriate:

- ◆ in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies at Higher level
- ◆ in a social subject at an equivalent level

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in the Unit.

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the religious and ethical issues within medical ethics.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the religious and ethical issues which are associated with each area of study.
- (b) Provide a detailed explanation of the legal and medical background to the religious and ethical issues involved.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse in detail the religious and ethical issues within medical ethics.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain different religious viewpoints on the issues.
- (b) Explain different ethical viewpoints on the issues.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate the religious and ethical issues within medical ethics.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Critically analyse a range of different viewpoints.
- (b) Present a reasoned personal conclusion based on the viewpoints considered.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required to demonstrate the achievement of all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for this Unit. The evidence will be produced under closed-book supervised conditions within a time limit of one hour. As candidates will develop their knowledge and understanding throughout their study of the Unit it would be appropriate for this to take place towards the end of the Unit. The evidence must cover the following:

- ◆ **one** religious and ethical issue with a detailed explanation of the legal and medical background
- ◆ **two** religious and **two** ethical viewpoints
- ◆ a reasoned, personal conclusion

A suitable assessment will cover one of the areas specified in the appendix to the statement of standards for this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank (NAB) items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit seeks to develop understanding, analysis and evaluation of issues within medical ethics. It should enable candidates to critically reflect on complex issues which involve aspects of medical, legal and ethical understanding. Candidates will be able to evaluate important medical developments and assess these in the light of relevant laws applicable in the UK and elsewhere. Through this, candidates will develop a detailed understanding of how issues relating to medical ethics are treated by contemporary society. In addition, candidates will refer to the recommendations of interested public bodies (such as the BMA) in these complex areas and relate these to the current legal position.

Through the study of medical ethics, candidates will also examine key ethical questions such as, ‘What is the value of life?’, ‘What rights and responsibilities do we have towards each other?’ ‘Are there limits to individual freedoms?’ and ‘How should we respond to the possibilities offered by modern medical technology?’ These are fundamental issues surrounding what it means to be human and use immediate and relevant contexts through which candidates can examine such important issues.

In addition, candidates will explore religious and ethical viewpoints on these issues. This will allow candidates not only to develop knowledge and understanding of a range of viewpoints, but to use these to assist in their own development of a consistent set of beliefs and values. Candidates should be encouraged to explore conflicting viewpoints within religious traditions, learning that religions rarely have one fixed view on complex moral issues. This will help candidates in their understanding of the nature of religious belief and how religious people develop their beliefs and values. It will, for example, assist candidates in assessing the nature and validity of the sources which religious people draw on when making moral decisions about complex issues. Candidates are likely in this area to draw on the teachings of a variety of Christian traditions, though it is also possible to use religious responses from other major world religions as appropriate.

A parallel process in relation to ethical viewpoints will allow candidates to explore responses to these complex medical issues from within secular viewpoints. These viewpoints will be widely recognised philosophical positions such as modern utilitarianism or virtue ethics, or they may come from individually recognised philosophers such as Peter Singer. In addition, candidates may wish to draw upon structured ethical systems such as Humanism in their examination of ethical responses.

Candidates should be encouraged not to treat religious and ethical viewpoints simplistically as polar opposites, but to recognise the commonality of views held across religious and ethical viewpoints as well as their differences. They should also be aware of differences between and within religious traditions as well as between and within ethical systems which are secular.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

Responses to all the issues will involve study of reports, publications and developments within religions and other organisations (eg British Medical Association, Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority). They should take full account of the medical and legal background to the ethical issues raised. Each area offers opportunities to draw upon religious and ethical viewpoints as expressed through churches, other religious groups and organisations representing secular viewpoints as well as individual philosophers and ethicists.

The following topics will be studied:

1 Beginning of life

The treatment and rights of embryos
Abortion

2 Prolongation of life

The procurement of organs
The allocation of organs

3 Ending of life

Palliative care of terminal illness
Euthanasia

Greater detail of these areas of study is to be found in the appendix at the end of this Unit.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Learning and teaching approaches should reflect the aims and rationale of the subject. It should be varied and interesting, to encourage enthusiasm for the basic argument and discussion inherent in the nature of the Outcomes. Candidates should be encouraged to compare their own attitudes and values and identify with the stances taken in each Outcome. Working in groups, class discussion, extracts from film and television can all help understanding as well as engendering enthusiasm.

A variety of teaching approaches is recommended and candidates should be given every opportunity to participate in whole-class activity, in small groups, and as individuals. Ideally the approach should be candidate-centred and activity based, but whole-class teaching can play a part in a flexible programme as a means of establishing understanding.

In this learning and teaching process, it is recommended that teachers/lecturers include a wide range of stimulus materials, invited speakers, visits, paper-based resources and ICT resources. The resources should be accessible, interesting, and manageable for candidates working at this level and should allow them to draw upon and reflect on their own beliefs and values.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

To achieve Outcome 1, candidates are required to identify and describe religious and ethical issues associated with each area of study. This is supported by the medical and legal background. Candidates are not required to have detailed technical knowledge of the scientific processes involved in each area, but they should be aware of the most important medical developments and how they relate to the particular issue being studied. Candidates should be able to present reasoned and coherent descriptions of the religious and ethical viewpoints drawing upon the medical and legal background. This background may also use classic and contemporary case studies to support and develop lines of argument.

In Outcome 2, candidates are encouraged to broaden their understanding of medical ethics by analysing some of the issues involved. They should explain different viewpoints on the issues and illustrate them by reference to appropriate sources. Such sources should be relevant to the line of argument and used correctly to support or challenge a line of argument.

In Outcome 3, candidates are required to evaluate issues by assessing the relevance or validity of the evidence or viewpoints examined. A variety of viewpoints, including those from within Christian traditions should be explored in some depth. Candidates are expected to build on the knowledge and understanding gained in relation to Outcomes 1 and 2 in order to deepen their understanding of the issues.

Candidates should seek to present a coherent and balanced conclusion from this evaluation.

Some candidates in this area carry out original research into views held about the issues. While this is helpful in developing an understanding of the issues involved, it should be borne in mind that religious and ethical viewpoints should be drawn from recognised religious traditions as well as recognised individual philosophers and ethicists. In addition, candidates carrying out such original research should follow appropriate ethical guidelines when doing so — for example recognising the privacy of respondents and showing concern for their welfare. Many of the issues in this Course are emotive and can be very personal for some. Candidates should bear in mind that while the development of their own beliefs and values through study of aspects of this Course is important, the Course requires candidates to be able to build logical and coherent argument which goes well beyond the mere expression of personal viewpoints. Responses should synthesise the medical and legal background into the religious and ethical viewpoints thus achieving the Outcomes specified.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout this Unit candidates will have the opportunity to develop the skills of critical thinking and both written and oral communication. The Unit content lends itself to critically analysing a number of texts and viewpoints relating to important issues in medical ethics. These issues will be the focus for discussion in the classroom and for writing critical essays in both formative and summative assessment.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

The Evidence Requirements section sets out clearly what must be addressed by candidates and what evidence tutors must look for in an assessment tool. While all areas of content listed in the appendix must be covered only one area need be assessed in the Unit Assessment.

An appropriate Instrument of Assessment would be a single closed-book test, lasting no more than one hour, which may contain an essay type question. The assessment should make use of sources used in class teaching.

Evidence should be gathered by means of a single assessment towards the end of the Unit. Care should be taken to ensure sufficient time is allowed for remediation and reassessment, if required.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

NB: This appendix forms part of the statement of standards, ie requirements that are mandatory.

Beginning of life: The treatment and rights of embryos

Outcome 1

Embryonic stem cell research: Legal and Medical

- ◆ Medical and legal status of the embryo
- ◆ Medical uses and implications
- ◆ Examples of current research involving embryos
- ◆ Legal restrictions and implications (UK and other legal systems)
- ◆ Examples of current regulations (UK and other legal systems)
- ◆ Guidance from medical governing bodies, eg BMA

Outcome 2

Embryonic stem cell research: Religious and Ethical viewpoints

Religious responses

Two religious views on:

- ◆ Status of the embryo
- ◆ Research involving embryos
- ◆ IVF

Ethical responses

Two conflicting viewpoints on:

- ◆ Status of the embryo
- ◆ Research involving embryos
- ◆ IVF

Beginning of life: Abortion

Outcome 1

Abortion: Legal and Medical

- ◆ Medical and legal status of the embryo
- ◆ Medical reasons and implications
- ◆ Examples of current issues
- ◆ Legal restrictions and implications (UK and other legal systems)
- ◆ Examples of current regulations (UK and other legal systems)
- ◆ Guidance from medical governing bodies, eg BMA

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

Outcome 2

Abortion: Religious and Ethical viewpoints

Religious responses

Two religious views on:

- ◆ Sanctity/Quality of life
- ◆ Rights of the unborn child
- ◆ Rights of the parents
- ◆ Alternatives to abortion

Ethical responses

Two conflicting viewpoints on:

- ◆ Sanctity/Quality of life
- ◆ Rights of the unborn child
- ◆ Rights of the parents
- ◆ Alternatives to abortion

Prolongation of life: Procurement of organs

Outcome 1

Procurement: Legal and Medical

- ◆ 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

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

Outcome 2

Procurement: Religious and Ethical viewpoints

Religious responses

Two religious views on:

- ◆ Donors (cadaveric, living, anencephalic infants, foetuses)
- ◆ Types of procurement (voluntary, involuntary, compulsory, trade, non-human species, synthetic)

Ethical responses

Two conflicting viewpoints on:

- ◆ Donors (cadaveric, living, anencephalic infants, foetuses)
- ◆ Types of procurement (voluntary, involuntary, compulsory, trade, non-human species, synthetic)

Prolongation of life: Distribution of organs

Outcome 1

Distribution: Legal and Medical

- ◆ Organ and tissue distribution policies (UK and other legal systems)
- ◆ Medical implications
- ◆ Legal restrictions and implications
- ◆ Examples of current regulations (UK and other legal systems)
- ◆ Guidance from medical governing bodies, eg BMA

Outcome 2

Distribution: Religious and Ethical viewpoints

Religious responses

Two religious views on:

- ◆ Allocation of limited resources (selection criteria, cost, universality, fairness)
- ◆ Xenografting

Ethical responses

Two conflicting viewpoints on:

- ◆ Allocation of limited resources (selection criteria, cost, universality, fairness)
- ◆ Xenografting

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

The Ending of Life — Palliative Care for those with life-limiting conditions

Outcome 1

Palliative Care: Legal and Medical

- ◆ Types of palliative care (life-sustaining technologies, other forms of care for those with life-limiting conditions)
- ◆ Medical uses of palliative care
- ◆ Laws surrounding care for those with life-limiting conditions
- ◆ Allocation of limited resources in relation to palliative care (selection criteria, cost, universality, fairness)
- ◆ Guidance from medical governing bodies, eg BMA

Outcome 2

Palliative Care: Religious and Ethical viewpoints

Religious responses

Two religious views on:

- ◆ Care of those with life-limiting conditions
- ◆ Possible value in suffering and the meaning of death
- ◆ Allocation of limited resources in relation to palliative care (selection criteria, cost, universality, fairness)

Ethical responses

Two conflicting viewpoints on:

- ◆ Care of those with life-limiting conditions
- ◆ Possible value in suffering and the meaning of death
- ◆ Allocation of limited resources in relation to palliative care (selection criteria, cost, universality, fairness)

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher)

The Ending of Life — Euthanasia

Outcome 1

Euthanasia: Legal and Medical

- ◆ Types of euthanasia (voluntary, involuntary)
- ◆ Methods of euthanasia (active, passive)
- ◆ Medical uses and implications of euthanasia
- ◆ The law and euthanasia or Physician assisted suicide (UK and other legal systems)
- ◆ Implications of the law
- ◆ Appropriate case studies
- ◆ Guidance from medical governing bodies, eg BMA

Outcome 2

Euthanasia: Religious and Ethical viewpoints

Religious responses

Two religious views on:

- ◆ Voluntary, involuntary, active and passive euthanasia
- ◆ Physician assisted suicide
- ◆ Double effect
- ◆ Care of those with life-limiting conditions

Ethical responses

Two conflicting viewpoints on:

- ◆ Voluntary, involuntary, active and passive euthanasia
- ◆ Physician assisted suicide
- ◆ Double effect
- ◆ Care of those with life-limiting conditions

Outcome 3

Candidates will consider a variety of religious, ethical and medical viewpoints, critically evaluate these and present a reasoned opinion based on their consideration of these viewpoints.