



Advanced Higher
Course
Specification



Advanced Higher Religious Moral and Philosophical Studies Course Specification

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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: Advanced Higher Religious Moral and Philosophical Studies

SCQF: level 7 (32 SCQF credit points)

Course code: to be advised

Mandatory Units

All learners will study the following **two** mandatory Units.

Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher) 8 SCQF credit points

Researching Religious, Moral and Philosophical Issues (Advanced Higher) 8 SCQF credit points

Learners will also study **one** of the following **two** optional Units:

Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher) 8 SCQF credit points

Religious Experience (Advanced Higher) 8 SCQF credit points

Course assessment 8 SCQF credit points

This Course includes eight SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

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 the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course

Progression

This Course or its components may provide progression to:

- ◆ degree courses in Theology, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Social Sciences and Social Subjects or related areas
- ◆ a diverse range of careers

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 and Unit Support Notes*.

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

This Course gives learners the opportunity to build on and extend knowledge and skills that they may have gained from a wide range of different disciplines and subjects, or from earlier experiences in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies at lower levels.

This Course provides learners with an opportunity to apply skills, knowledge and understanding in their appraisal of the role of religion, morality and philosophy in the modern world. This Course will enable learners to develop an understanding of how religion, morality and philosophy are at the core of human history and culture and continue to have a significant impact on the world today. This distinct focus is part of the Course's contribution to developing learners' skills, knowledge and understanding.

This Course requires learners to critically evaluate complex religious, moral and philosophical issues, develop and apply insights into a variety of viewpoints and challenges to these, and explore enduring questions and responses affecting the lives and values of people in the world today. This Course also provides learners with an opportunity to enhance their understanding of, and respect for, different faiths and beliefs.

This Course will also provide opportunities for learners to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. These include developing literacy skills as learners engage with challenging texts and produce extended written arguments and conclusions. They will develop personal learning as they work independently to research religious, moral and philosophical issues. Developing understanding and respect for different views can develop a sense of responsible citizenship.

Purpose and aims of the Course

The purpose of this Course is to develop knowledge and understanding of religious, moral and philosophical issues relevant to the contemporary world and to develop skills of analysing and evaluating complex issues. It will provide learners with the opportunity to synthesise information and draw reasoned conclusions. Learners can apply the skills they have learned at Higher and elsewhere in the curriculum.

This Course makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum by helping learners gain an in-depth understanding of significant ethical, theological and philosophical themes, and of society's religious and social diversity.

The main aims of this Course are to enable learners to:

- ◆ develop a self-directed approach to learning and research
- ◆ analyse and evaluate evidence
- ◆ synthesise information in response to religious, moral and philosophical issues in the contemporary world
- ◆ develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of some key philosophical issues found within religion today, and the ways in which religions have responded
- ◆ develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of themes and debates in medical ethics
- ◆ develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of religious experience and responses
- ◆ experience an intellectually challenging opportunity to develop higher-order thinking skills by carrying out independent research into religious, moral or philosophical issues

This Course will enable learners to demonstrate substantial autonomy in their learning through researching and analysing, extended writing, demonstrating independent study skills and applying critical-thinking. They will also have the opportunity to develop skills in debate and discussion.

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 religious, moral and philosophical issues and their contribution to society, both past and present.

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, it may be beneficial for learners to have attained the skills and knowledge required by the Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course, the Higher Philosophy Course or equivalent qualifications. The Higher Psychology Course and the Higher Sociology Course may also provide meaningful progression into this Course.

This Course is particularly suitable for learners who might wish to progress to degree courses and careers in medicine, social subjects, social sciences and law.

Through the successful completion of this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills including: the ability to plan and carry out independent research into complex religious, moral or philosophical issues; evaluating, analysing and synthesising evidence; and structuring and sustaining detailed, well-informed and well-reasoned arguments expressed with clarity.

RMPS 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 and lateral progression is possible to other qualifications in the Social Studies suite of Courses.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

Through this Course, learners will develop a range of higher-order thinking skills including researching, analysing and evaluating information in order to explain and understand religious, moral and philosophical issues.

The Course has two mandatory Units and two optional Units. There is considerable flexibility in themes which can be studied to allow personalisation and choice.

Through the successful completion of this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills including: the ability to carry out independent research into complex religious, moral or philosophical issues; evaluating, analysing and synthesising evidence; structuring and sustaining detailed, well-informed and well-reasoned arguments, expressed with clarity; and understanding and analysing religious, moral and philosophical issues.

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.

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

Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher) — mandatory Unit

In this Unit, learners will develop skills to critically evaluate key theological and philosophical issues from the philosophy of religion. They will develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of how these arguments and responses to them contribute to the development of a stance for living.

Researching Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Advanced Higher) — mandatory Unit

In this Unit, learners will develop a range of skills relevant to undertaking independent research including: how to identify appropriate research issues, plan and manage a complex programme of research; source, collect and record appropriate and reliable information; evaluate, analyse and synthesise evidence; and organise, present and reference findings using appropriate conventions

Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher) — optional Unit

In this Unit, learners will develop skills to critically evaluate a range of complex issues involving medical ethics. Learners will develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of the issues and religious and non-religious responses, including the philosophical reasoning behind these responses.

Religious Experience (Advanced Higher) — optional Unit

In this Unit, learners will develop skills to critically evaluate a range of complex issues concerning religious experience and religious and other responses. Learners will develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of different perspectives on religious experience.

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

This covers:

- ◆ demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and understanding of complex issues arising from the philosophy of religion, responses from religious and other perspectives
- ◆ demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and understanding of complex issues in medical ethics or concerning religious experience, responses from religious and other perspectives
- ◆ explaining, analysing and evaluating evidence from a wide range of sources
- ◆ structuring and sustaining detailed, well-informed and well-reasoned arguments, expressed with clarity
- ◆ carrying out independent research into complex religious, moral or philosophical issues
- ◆ identifying appropriate research issues
- ◆ planning and managing a complex programme of research
- ◆ sourcing, collecting and recording appropriate and reliable information
- ◆ synthesising information from a wide range of sources
- ◆ using appropriate referencing conventions
- ◆ explaining and applying interpretations of the context and relevance of the issues and making well-reasoned and detailed judgements

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 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:

Philosophy of Religion (Advanced Higher) — mandatory Unit

In this Unit, the learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ Critically evaluating arguments from the philosophy of religion

Researching Religious, Moral and Philosophical Issues (Advanced Higher) — mandatory Unit

In this Unit, the learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ Developing independent research skills in the context of complex religious, moral or philosophical issues

Medical Ethics (Advanced Higher) — optional Unit

The learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ Critically evaluating complex issues involving religion and medical ethics

Religious Experience (Advanced Higher) — optional Unit

The learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ Critically evaluating complex issues involving religious experience

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 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.

¹ Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html

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

- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

The learner will draw on, extend and apply the knowledge and skills they have learned during the Course. This will be assessed by a combination of a [question paper](#)² and a [project](#)³. The question paper will require demonstration of depth of knowledge, understanding and skills from across the Course. The project will require learners to extend and apply their knowledge and skills and will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

² See link above for definitions.

³ See link above for definitions.

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

It is expected that learners will also 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

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

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 and Unit Support Notes*.

Administrative information

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History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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