

# National 3 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course Support Notes



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

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# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the National 3 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the *Course Specification* and the *Unit Specifications* for the Units in the Course.

# General guidance on the Course

## Aims

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

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

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

## Progression into this Course

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will benefit from having completed related Courses in social subjects at the level below. Others will draw on comparable learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Course.

When considering whether this Course is appropriate for a particular learner, teachers should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding described below, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together, these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

### Experiences and outcomes

Learners who have completed Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes will find these an appropriate basis for doing the Course.

The experiences and outcomes for Religious and Moral Education or Religious Education in Roman Catholic Schools may provide an appropriate basis for entry to this Course. It should be noted that, although these experiences and outcomes provide a general background which is relevant to this Course, there is no direct match between the experiences and outcomes and the requirements of this Course.

Learners may also have relevant skills and knowledge gained through other education systems or from their own interests and informal learning.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the National 3 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies *Course Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

Within this mandatory specification, Course planners have considerable flexibility to select coherent contexts which will stimulate and challenge their learners, offering both breadth and depth.

A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course includes:

### Skills

- ◆ understanding and commenting on the meaning of sources related to world religions, in simple terms
- ◆ expressing views about contemporary moral questions and responses, in simple terms
- ◆ outlining religious and philosophical questions and responses, in simple terms

### Knowledge and understanding

- ◆ simple knowledge and understanding of the impact and significance of religion today through studying some beliefs, practices and sources found within one of the world's six major religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism) and the contribution these make to the lives of followers
- ◆ simple knowledge and understanding of contemporary moral issues and responses to them
- ◆ simple knowledge and understanding of religious and philosophical questions and responses

## Progression from this Course

This Course may provide progression to Units or Courses in related social subjects in school and further education contexts. In particular, it provides progression to the National 4 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course.

## Hierarchies

**Hierarchy** is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured sequence involving two or more SCQF levels.

RMPS Units and Courses are offered from SCQF level 3 to SCQF level 7. Vertical progression is possible through the levels of RMPS qualifications and lateral progression is possible to other qualifications in the social studies suite of Courses.

The Course is designed in hierarchy with the corresponding Courses at SCQF levels 4, 5 and Higher. The RMPS Courses at all these levels have the same structure of three Units with corresponding titles: *World Religion, Morality and Belief*, and *Religious and Philosophical Questions*.

The Units have been written in a hierarchical format so that teachers will be able to design learning activities that are appropriate for groups of learners working at different levels. This will also allow learners to achieve at their highest possible level and achieve at a lower level, if necessary. This has been accompanied with considerable flexibility in topics and contexts for learning, to facilitate personalisation and choice for learners and centres. At National 3 (and National 4) there is no mandatory content for the Course or the Units. Centres have the option to choose contexts for learning that will enable them to meet the requirements of the Course, the Outcomes and the Assessment Standards.

The degree of choice and flexibility within the Course allows for new areas of study for learners who progress from one level to another and ensures that learners are not required to repeat content from one level to the next. Differentiation can be achieved through the use of more complex sources of evidence and greater depth of treatment of common issues or topics.

Learning should be progressive and not repetitive as learners progress through the levels. While Course planning may involve returning to concepts or themes developed at a lower level in order to develop knowledge and understanding and skills in greater depth, it is important that content in a Course and/or Unit at one particular SCQF level is not repeated excessively if a learner progresses to the next level of the hierarchy. The skills and knowledge should be able to be applied to new content and contexts to enrich the learning experience. This is for centres to manage.

# Approaches to learning and teaching

## General advice

Detailed advice and exemplification of approaches to generating evidence through teaching and learning approaches can be found in the following *Unit Support Notes* for RMPS (National 3) Units:

- ◆ World Religion
- ◆ Morality and Belief
- ◆ Religious and Philosophical Questions

The RMPS Course should be seen as a coherent study of religion, morality and philosophy within the world today. There will be opportunities throughout the Course to reinforce and deepen learning by making links between aspects of knowledge and understanding across Units, depending on the particular topics and issues studied.

## Allocation of skills to Units for assessment purposes

Each Unit has a specific skills focus for Unit assessment purposes, as described in the table below. This approach is designed to avoid over-assessment. Allocating skills to particular Units in this way means that where a learner completes this Course they will not have to repeat assessment for the same skill more than once.

It is important to stress that particular skills have been allocated to individual Units for Unit assessment purposes only. The skills should be developed and practised across all the Units and are transferable to all three.

Unit title	Skill(s) allocated for assessment purposes
World Religion	Commenting on the meaning of religious beliefs, practices and sources
Morality and Belief	Expressing views about contemporary moral questions and responses
Religious and Philosophical Questions	Outlining questions from the philosophy of religion and responses



### **Coverage of religious views**

In each of the Units, religious viewpoints studied must come from one of the world's six major religions. Within this, centres are free to focus on a particular denomination or tradition within a religion. It is common practice for centres to study more than one tradition or denomination.

### **Sequence of delivery**

There is no recommended teaching order for the Units in this Course. Different combinations or orderings of Unit delivery will be appropriate in different contexts. This is for centres to manage. Much will depend on the timetable and staffing demands of centres. Common practice includes:

- ◆ Units taught sequentially
- ◆ Morality and Belief and RPQ taught first, World Religion Unit taught last
- ◆ (for Core RE) one Unit in S3 and one Unit in S4

### **The meaning of 'content free'**

There is no mandatory course content for National 3. The Unit assessment standards are mandatory which means that teachers and lecturers are able to plan content themselves.

Where Units are free-standing, centres often open up the content and study areas not covered in National 5 upwards. This approach is often adopted in 'core' RME with whole year groups.

Where learners are part of a multi-level or bi-level class that has opted to study RMPS, the approach tends to be based on the mandatory content from National 5 upwards so that there is the opportunity of changing levels of learners as required.

The *Course and Unit Support Notes* that follow are based on approaches other than following the mandatory content of higher levels. Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course and Unit Support Notes* of National 5 and Higher for advice on Course content where the mandatory content of these levels is going to be followed at National 3.

### **Assessment and gathering evidence**

There are likely to be opportunities in the day-to-day delivery of the Units in a Course to generate evidence which satisfies completely or partially a Unit or Units. This is naturally occurring evidence and may be recorded as evidence for the Units or parts of the Units.

A few points to bear in mind:

- ◆ Assessment Standards apply to evidence that has been generated across a whole Unit, not just one topic within a Unit, which means that different issues covered in a Unit can form evidence of attainment
- ◆ Assessment evidence can be generated through classroom activities, homework, class tests or prelims

- ◆ Common practice is to retain a copy of such evidence or to have a special folder/jotter where learners write up or store their evidence

The following information aims to provide advice and guidance to centres when developing activities which may generate evidence that learners have achieved the Outcomes and Assessment Standards for the Units. The explanations aim to provide greater detail and complement the terminology used in the Outcomes and Assessment Standards, which are based upon the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

The following terms are used within the *Unit Specifications* for this Course:

- ◆ ‘Explaining’ will involve learners in providing simple evidence that they have an awareness of an idea, issue, religious practice or belief, and are able to present a simple and accurate description of its features. They will also be able to demonstrate that they understand the connections between an idea, belief, issue or source.
- ◆ ‘Presenting reasoned and simple conclusions’ will involve learners in being able to go beyond simply stating a conclusion.
- ◆ ‘Conclusions’ will involve learners in providing a simple conclusion on a relevant issue that brings together accurate factual information with an explanation. The conclusion must clearly explain a point of view on the topic/theme.

### **Analysing**

Analysis is a pivotal skill in National 3. The focus in analysis is on breaking factual information. Analysis can follow knowledge and understanding and very often excellent knowledge and understanding is, in fact, analysis. Similarly, analysis often precedes evaluation. Analysis includes the following:

- ◆ making connections
- ◆ explaining the background
- ◆ predicting consequences
- ◆ identifying implications
- ◆ interpreting sources and viewpoints

### **Evaluating**

Evaluation is probably the most challenging skill at National 3. Over the years, evaluation has been misunderstood as simply listing two sides of an argument. The skill demands much more than this and expects candidates to discuss the quality of any positions taken. This involves:

- ◆ making a supported judgement on an issue
- ◆ making a supported measurement of the effects, impact or significance of an issue
- ◆ presenting a case for or against a position

The following guidance aims to provide high-level advice on making assessment judgements between levels, by detailing the characteristics of typical learner responses.

Further advice and guidance will be provided in the specimen question paper and marking instructions (National 5 and Higher), specimen coursework and marking instructions (National 5 and Higher), Added Value Unit assessment support (National 4 only) and Unit assessment support (all levels).

<b>Level</b>	<b>Possible learner responses</b>	<b>Possible question types/command words</b>
Higher	Extended response Explanation and analysis required Clear and structured expression of complex ideas Extensive and detailed use of evidence Able to consider different perspectives on an issue Able to make judgements	Discuss ... To what extent ... How far ... Assess ... Critically examine ... Comment on ...
National 5	Detailed response Description and explanation required with some analysis Clarity in expression of ideas Insightful use of evidence Use of appropriate exemplification	Describe, in detail, ... Explain, in detail, ... To what extent ... How important ...
National 4	Limited response Descriptions and brief explanations Some clarity and structure in response Limited use of evidence Use of obvious exemplification	Describe ... Give reasons ...
National 3	Short response/outline Ability to make limited use of simple evidence Ability to consider consequences	Outline ... Comment on ...

Learning about Scotland and Scottish culture will enrich learners' learning experience and help them to develop the skills for learning, life and work they will need to prepare them for taking their place in a diverse, inclusive and participative Scotland and beyond. Where there are opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts, teachers and lecturers should consider this.

## **Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work**

Through the successful completion of this Course, learners develop important skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. A full list of these is contained in the *Course Specification*. Further advice on how these skills may be developed is included in the *Unit Support Notes*.

The skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work will not be formally assessed within the Course. However, Course planners should identify opportunities to enhance these skills throughout the Course. Learners should be aware of the skills they are building and teachers/lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practise and improve them.

These skills will be developed across all the Units of the Course. The *Unit Support Notes* for each Unit give further advice on how Units within the Course may provide opportunities to develop particular skills.

There may also be opportunities for other, additional skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work to be developed in the Course. For example, a teaching approach based on extensive use of group discussions could provide opportunities to develop the skills of listening and talking. However, this could vary across centres depending on approaches being used to deliver the Course, and this is for centres to manage.

## Combining assessment across Units

If an integrated or thematic approach to Course delivery is used, there may be opportunities for combining assessment across Units.

This can:

- ◆ enrich the assessment process for learners by linking assessment more closely to teaching and learning
- ◆ make more sense to learners and avoid duplication of assessment
- ◆ allow for evidence for particular Units to be drawn from a range of activities
- ◆ allow more time for learning

Care should be taken that any aspects of the Assessment Standard not achieved by the combined assessment are covered by a further assessment. When designing assessments to cover multiple Units, teachers/lecturers must track and record where evidence appears of individual Units.

# Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Course in terms of possible approaches to Unit assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. Alternative assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments can be made to assessment requirements to ensure this Course is accessible to all learners.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html).

# Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications on SQA's website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>
- ◆ [\*Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Course Specifications\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Design Principles for National Courses\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Guide to Assessment \(June 2008\)\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Overview of Qualification Reports\*](#)
- ◆ *Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas*
- ◆ *Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time*
- ◆ *Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*
- ◆ [\*SCQF Handbook: User Guide\*](#) and SCQF level descriptors: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html)
- ◆ [\*SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool\*](#)

## Appendix 2: Coverage of world religions

Across the *Unit Support Notes* for National 3, National 4, National 5 and Higher there are examples of teaching and learning in the context of various world religions.

All the examples provided have been written so that the approach described could easily be transferred and adopted within the context of a different level or a different religion.

When considering approaches to teaching and learning it may help to refer to examples provided at other levels and in the context of other religions.

	<b>National 3</b>	<b>National 4</b>	<b>National 5</b>	<b>Higher</b>
Christianity	✓		✓	✓
Buddhism		✓	✓	
Islam				✓
Judaism	✓			
Hinduism		✓		



# Administrative information

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**Published:** May 2016 (version 2.0)

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## History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	Updated to reflect the revised Assessment Standards in each Unit.	Qualifications Manager	May 2016

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## Unit Support Notes — World Religion (National 3)



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

# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *World Religion* (National 3) Unit. They are intended for teachers/lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Support Notes*
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

# General guidance on the Unit

## Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop simple knowledge and understanding of the impact and significance of religion today through studying some key beliefs, practices and sources found within one of the world's six major religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) and the contribution these make to the lives of followers. Learners will develop skills to comment on the meaning of sources related to the religion selected for study.

## Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will benefit from having completed related Courses in social subjects at the level below. Others will draw on comparable learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Course.

When considering whether this Unit is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together, these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the National 3 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies *Course Specification* and *Course Support Notes*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers are free to select the content and contexts for learning which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres. The content or contexts chosen must fulfil the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding as described in the *Course Specification*, and must enable learners to meet the requirements of the Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

## Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to Units or Courses in related social subjects in school and further education contexts. In particular, it provides progression to the National 4 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course. Learners may also wish to consider progression to the Award in Religion, Belief and Values.

# Approaches to learning and teaching and assessment

The aim of this section is to provide advice and guidance to centres on:

- ◆ the range of content covered in a variety of centres for each world religion
- ◆ approaches to assessment

SQA does not prescribe detailed course content to centres. These support notes have drawn together the content covered by a wide range of centres and suggestions made by individual specialist teachers. Centres may wish to use various aspects of these as a basis for course development appropriate to their centre. The content listed is neither exhaustive nor mandatory and is provided on the basis that it will:

- ◆ allow centres to develop interesting and challenging courses
- ◆ provide teachers and lecturers with ideas used by colleagues in a wide range of centres to construct courses
- ◆ provide teachers with a framework for developing their own courses appropriate to their own pupils

Courses at National 5 focus on one religion and, very often, on two denominations or traditions within one religion. The suggestions that follow take an alternative approach to content and use themes which can be found across religions. Whilst recognising the potential limitations of this approach it does give candidates the opportunity to study a variety of religions.

A list of themes is noted below, followed by more detail in three examples:

- ◆ religion and light
- ◆ religion and blood
- ◆ religion and food
- ◆ religion and dress
- ◆ religion and the senses
- ◆ belonging
- ◆ witnessing
- ◆ dying
- ◆ worshipping
- ◆ life cycle

Theme	Topic	Comments
Food	Kosher Halal Vegetarianism	Food has a prominent place in religion. Dietary customs in religion reveal much about the beliefs and practices of a religion. The list could be extended to festival food which would allow exploration of themes relating to the symbolism of certain foods for religious people.
Dress	Head Body Adornments	Religions often have rules or customs relating to dress. Very often these have to do with modesty but there is rich symbolism in dress codes too. Approaching the dress theme through parts of the body could prove an interesting way of exploring this theme. Under adornments, religions invariably have items like crosses, 5Ks, tallith, etc, which have their own significance.
Senses	Sight Sound Taste Touch Smell	Religion is a multi-sensory experience. Sight in religion could have pilgrimage or art as the focus, whilst sound could explore religious music or religious chants. Taste could cover food laws, whilst touch could explore simple acts of touching like bathing in the Ganges, touching the Black Stone, the laying on of hand, etc. In terms of smell, incense is widely used in religion for a variety of reasons and on a variety of occasions.

## Unit assessment

Unit assessments have been designed to provide opportunities for candidates to prepare for the question paper. It is possible to cover the Assessment Standards in a variety of ways and without being too burdensome in terms of time and workload. Centres may choose the method of gathering the evidence, whether it be portfolio or a more traditional timed assessment in class.

Unit assessment can be broken down into manageable exercises using the kind of method exemplified below:

1. Assessment Standard 1.1 on belief A
2. Assessment Standard 1.2 on practice B
3. Assessment Standard 2.1 on belief A and practice B
4. Assessment Standard 2.2 on belief C and practice D

## Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the Course, is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes*. This Unit will provide many opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

The specific skills focus of the Unit is to apply knowledge and understanding of the significance and impact of religion today by examining sources, beliefs and practices.

Developing an understanding of the contribution religious belief and practices make to the lives of followers and to the society in which they live will help develop citizenship and learners' ability to apply what they have learnt.

Learning in this Unit will encourage reflective thinking to consider what sources mean for followers of religion, but also how they impact on wider society and what the learner can take from these teaching as relevant to their own lives, encouraging application of learning. Learners should have the opportunity to be involved in directing their own learning and in developing their next steps.

The Unit will provide an ideal opportunity for activities which make a link between religious belief and the more active, practical nature of religion.

# Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Unit in terms of possible approaches to assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. This Unit should be accessible to all learners.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in this document is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that any alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.



# Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications on SQA's website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment](#)
- ◆ [Course Specifications](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment \(June 2008\)](#)
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- ◆ *Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time*
- ◆ *Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook: User Guide](#) and SCQF level descriptors: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool](#)
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
- ◆ SQA e-assessment web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html)

## Appendix 2: Coverage of world religions

Across the *Unit Support Notes* for National 3, National 4, National 5 and Higher there are examples of teaching and learning in the context of various world religions. All the examples provided have been written so that the approach described could easily be transferred and adopted within the context of a different level or a different religion.

When considering approaches to teaching and learning it may help to refer to examples provided at other levels and in the context of other religions.

	<b>National 3</b>	<b>National 4</b>	<b>National 5</b>	<b>Higher</b>
Christianity	✓		✓	✓
Buddhism		✓	✓	
Islam				✓
Judaism	✓			
Hinduism		✓		

# Administrative information

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**Published:** May 2016 (version 2.0)

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## History of changes to Unit Support Notes

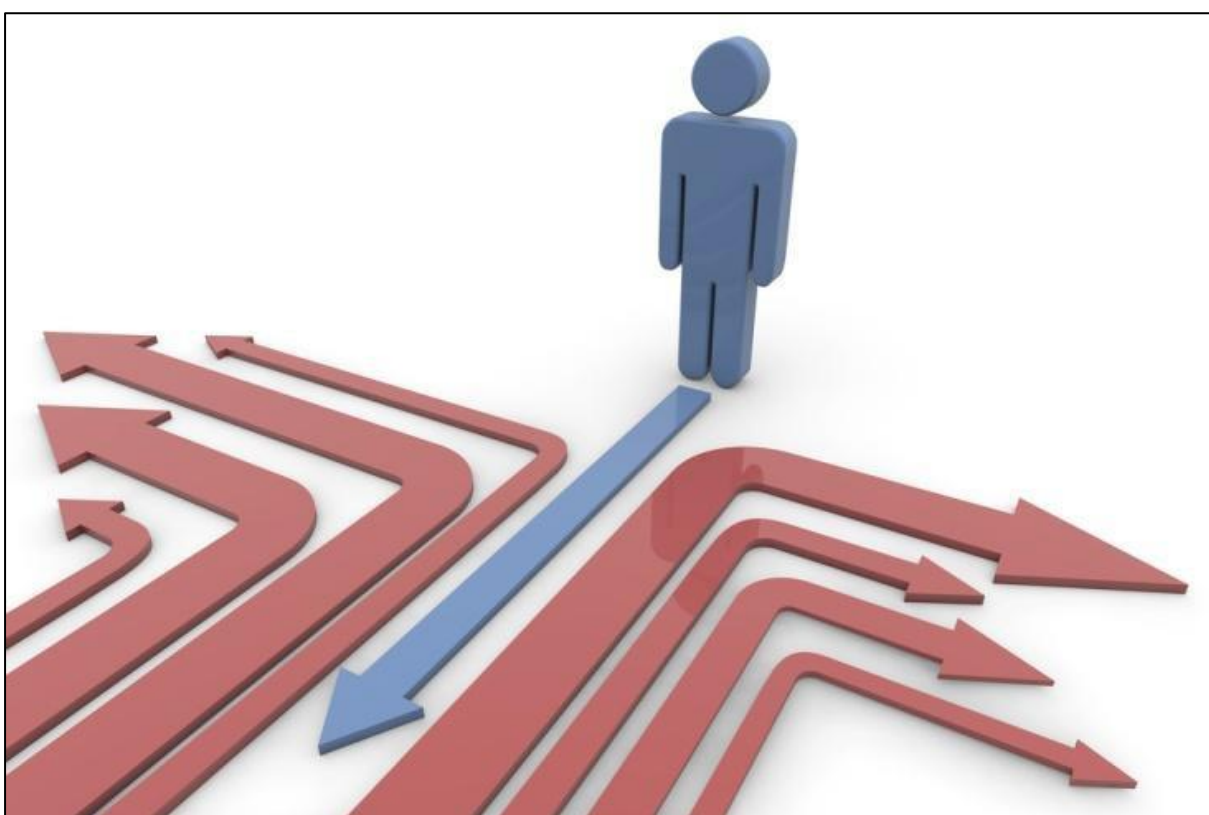
Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	Updated to reflect the revised Assessment Standards in the <i>World Religion</i> Unit. Inclusion of possible themes and topics for teaching.	Qualifications Manager	May 2016

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## Unit Support Notes — Morality and Belief (National 3)



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

# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Morality and Belief* Unit. They are intended for teachers/lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Support Notes*
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

# General guidance on the Unit

## Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to express views about contemporary moral questions and responses. Learners will develop simple knowledge and understanding of contemporary moral questions and religious and non-religious responses.

## Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will benefit from having completed related Courses in social subjects at the level below. Others will draw on comparable learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Course.

When considering whether this Unit is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together, these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the National 3 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies *Course Specification* and *Course Support Notes*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers/lecturers are free to select the content and contexts for learning which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres. The content or contexts chosen must fulfil the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding as described in the *Course Specification*, and must enable learners to meet the requirements of the Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

## Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to Units or Courses in related social subjects in school and further education contexts. In particular, it provides progression to the National 4 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course. Learners may also wish to consider progression to the Award in Religion, Belief and Values

The Course is designed in hierarchy with the corresponding Courses at SCQF levels 4, 5 and Higher. The RMPS Courses at all these levels have the same structure of three Units with corresponding titles: *World Religion, Morality and Belief*, and *Religious and Philosophical Questions*.

The Units have been written in a hierarchical format so that teachers will be able to design learning activities that are appropriate for groups of learners working at different levels. This will also allow learners to achieve at their highest possible level and achieve at a lower level, if necessary. This has been accompanied with considerable flexibility in topics and contexts for learning, to facilitate personalisation and choice for learners and centres. At National 3 (and National 4) there is no mandatory content for the Course or the Units. Centres have the option to choose contexts for learning that will enable them to meet the requirements of the Course, the Outcomes and the Assessment Standards.

The degree of choice and flexibility within the Course allows for new areas of study for learners who progress from one level to another and ensures that learners are not required to repeat content from one level to the next. Differentiation can be achieved through the use of more complex sources of evidence and greater depth of treatment of common issues or topics.

Learning should be progressive and not repetitive as learners progress through the levels. While Course planning may involve returning to concepts or themes developed at a lower level in order to develop knowledge and understanding and skills in greater depth, it is important that content in a Course and/or Unit at one particular SCQF level is not repeated excessively if a learner progresses to the next level of the hierarchy. The skills and knowledge should be able to be applied to new content and contexts to enrich the learning experience. This is for centres to manage.

# Approaches to learning and teaching and assessment

SQA does not prescribe detailed Course content to centres. These support notes have drawn together the content covered by a wide range of centres and suggestions made by individual specialist teachers. Centres may wish to use various aspects of these as a basis for Course development appropriate to their centre. The content listed is neither exhaustive nor mandatory and is provided on the basis that it will:

- ◆ allow centres to develop interesting and challenging courses
- ◆ provide teachers and lecturers with ideas used by colleagues in a wide range of centres to construct Courses
- ◆ provide teachers with a framework for developing their own Courses appropriate to their own learners

**Please note:** National 3 has no mandatory content. Centres that have National 4 and National 5 learners in the same class may wish to base courses on the mandatory content of National 5 RMPS.

Courses at National 5 focus on one ethical area. The suggestions that follow take an alternative approach to content and use themes which can be found across ethical issues. Whilst recognising the potential limitations of this approach, it does give learners the opportunity to study a variety of moral issues and to see potential conflicts in approaches.

A list of themes is noted below followed, by more detail in three examples:

- ◆ the taking of life
- ◆ conservation
- ◆ respect
- ◆ duty
- ◆ the media
- ◆ food
- ◆ money
- ◆ the vulnerable
- ◆ animal welfare
- ◆ slavery



Theme	Topic	Comments
Taking of life	Abortion Euthanasia War Death penalty	Learners could explore instances where there is a deliberate taking of life and human action/reaction to this. This thematic study would allow pupils to explore different perspectives and situations relating to the sanctity of life.
Respect	Sectarianism Racism Sexism LGBT	The moral issues arising from respect are wide and varied, as are the definitions of what respect involves. A topic like this could have some crossover with social subjects, especially Modern Studies, where RMPS could look at the moral dimension of respect.
Duty	Family State Environment Each other	Duty is a theme that can be split into several sub-headings. The areas shown could be broken down and studied discretely. The theme explores the moral issues arising from duty in different contexts and how these might conflict with an individual's own personal values.

## Unit assessment

Unit assessments have been designed to provide opportunities for candidates to prepare for the question paper. It is possible to cover the Assessment Standards in a variety of ways and without being too burdensome in terms of time and workload. Centres may choose the method of gathering the evidence, whether it be portfolio or a more traditional timed assessment in class.

Unit assessment can be broken down into manageable exercises using the kind of method exemplified below:

1. Assessment Standard 1.1 on issue A
2. Assessment Standard 1.2 on issue B
3. Assessment Standard 2.1 on issue C
4. Assessment Standard 2.2 on issue C

## Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the Course is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes*. This Unit will provide many opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

As the specific skills focus of this Unit is expressing a viewpoint, learners will develop the skills of personal learning, communicating and understanding. They will develop their ability to understand and reflect on sources and to consider different viewpoints which may conflict with their own. They will begin to develop the skill of expressing a point of view by commenting on what they have learnt.

Throughout this Unit there will be opportunities for learners to research and present their findings in a variety of ways. Learners will be actively engaged in seeking perspectives on issues that they agree or disagree with, giving them the opportunity to respect different points of view.

By researching and listening to different points of view on moral issues, learners will be helped to understand the link between belief and action. They will begin to see the consequences of actions and beliefs and the impact religious and non-religious beliefs have on the lives of people today. Developing an understanding of the contribution beliefs make to the lives of people and to the society in which they live will help develop citizenship, and learners' ability to apply what they have learnt.

The Unit will also provide rich and varied opportunities for learners to develop personal learning, by providing a variety of potential contexts for personal study and reflection. Learners should have the opportunity to be involved in directing their own learning and in developing their next steps.

# Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Unit in terms of possible approaches to assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. This Unit should be accessible to all learners.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in this document is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that any alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

# Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications on SQA's website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment](#)
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- ◆ *Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook: User Guide](#) and SCQF level descriptors: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool](#)
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
- ◆ SQA e-assessment web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html)

# Administrative information

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## History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	Updated to reflect the revised Assessment Standards in the <i>Morality and Belief</i> Unit. Inclusion of possible themes and topics for teaching.	Qualifications Manager	May 2016

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## Unit Support Notes — Religious and Philosophical Questions (National 3)



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

# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Religious and Philosophical Questions* (National 3) Unit. They are intended for teachers/lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Support Notes*
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

# General guidance on the Unit

## Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop skills to outline religious and philosophical questions and responses. Learners will develop simple knowledge and understanding of philosophical and religious questions and responses.

## Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will benefit from having completed related Courses in social subjects at the level below. Others will draw on comparable learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Course.

When considering whether this Unit is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course, and the learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together, these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the National 3 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies *Course Specification* and *Course Support Notes*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers/lecturers are free to select the content and contexts for learning which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres. The content or contexts chosen must fulfil the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding as described in the *Course Specification*, and must enable learners to meet the requirements of the Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

## Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to Units or Courses in related social subjects in school and further education contexts. In particular, it provides progression to the National 4 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course. Learners may also wish to consider progression to the Award in Religion, Belief and Values.



# Approaches to learning and teaching and assessment

The aim of this section is to provide advice and guidance to centres on:

- ◆ the range of content covered in a variety of centres for each world religion
- ◆ approaches to assessment

SQA does not prescribe detailed course content to centres. These support notes have drawn together the content covered by a wide range of centres and suggestions made by individual specialist teachers. Centres may wish to use various aspects of these as a basis for course development appropriate to their centre. The content listed is neither exhaustive nor mandatory and is provided on the basis that it will:

- ◆ allow centres to develop interesting and challenging Courses
- ◆ provide teachers and lecturers with ideas used by colleagues in a wide range of centres to construct Courses
- ◆ provide teachers with a framework for developing their own Courses appropriate to their own learners

**Please note:** National 3 has no mandatory content. Centres that have National 4 and National 5 learners in the same class may wish to base courses on the mandatory content of National 5 RMPS.

The suggestions that follow take an alternative approach to content and use themes which can be found across religious and philosophical questions. Whilst recognising the potential limitations of this approach, it does give learners the opportunity to study a variety of religious and philosophical issues.

A list of themes is noted below followed by more detail in three examples:

- ◆ How do we know what is true?
- ◆ Is there life after death?
- ◆ Where did God come from?
- ◆ What is God like?
- ◆ What is a religious experience?
- ◆ What is meant by the 'meaning of life'?
- ◆ Why are some questions hard to answer?
- ◆ Is there an explanation for everything?
- ◆ Do humans have a soul?
- ◆ Where do morals come from?

Theme	Topic	Comments
Life after death	The paranormal Belief in heaven and hell Belief in reincarnation	Life after death is a perennial favourite. Exploration of the paranormal and death is absorbing for most learners, followed by a general focus on religions that believe in heaven and hell and those that believe in reincarnation. There is scope too for exploring ideas relating to the existence and nature of the soul.
Religious experience	Visions Miracles Worship	Religious experience is less common among learners now than it was before. Looking at the variety of religious experience would give learners an opportunity to understand what they are about and also the opportunity to make links with local religious communities.
Origins of God	Prehistoric religion Ancient religion Monotheism	Further up the school, learners look at the origins of the universe and life, along with the existence of God. The origins of God could be a worthwhile area to explore. There are many fine books on the subject where the development of concepts of God is explored through the three themes listed. This would allow learners to explore bigger questions in relation to human spirituality and the evolution and purpose of religion.

## **Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work**

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the Course is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes*. This Unit will provide many opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

As the specific skills focus of the Unit is outlining questions and different responses to them, learners will develop skills of communicating and personal learning. Learners will have the opportunity to communicate what they have learnt in a variety of ways.

Learners will be actively engaged in seeking perspectives on questions that they agree or disagree with, giving them the opportunity to understand and respect different points of view. Listening to and understanding different beliefs on fundamental questions will engender respect and open-mindedness. This will help develop citizenship, and learners' ability to apply what they have learnt in their relationships with others.

The Unit will also provide opportunities for learners to develop personal learning, by providing rich and varied contexts for personal study and reflection.

The Unit also provides an ideal opportunity for activities which make a link between the factual elements of religious belief and the more active practical nature of religion. For example, visiting speakers from religious groups and online clips of religious speakers discussing the fundamental questions of existence provide valuable opportunities for learners to develop an understanding of the importance of such questions to people's daily lives.

# Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Unit in terms of possible approaches to assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. This Unit should be accessible to all learners.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in this document is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

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Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
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