



Advanced Higher  
Coursework  
Assessment Task



# Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

## Project—dissertation

## Assessment task

This document provides information for teachers and lecturers about the coursework component of this course in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed. It **must** be read in conjunction with the course specification.

**Valid from session 2025-26 and until further notice.**

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This edition: September 2025 (version 2.1)

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# Introduction

This document contains marking instructions and instructions for candidates for the Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies project—dissertation. You must read it in conjunction with the course specification.

This project—dissertation has 50 marks out of a total of 140 marks available for the course assessment.

This is one of two course assessment components. The other component is a question paper.

# Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions for the Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies project—dissertation are addressed to the marker. They will be helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

Candidates' evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking.

## General marking principles

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- a Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- b If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- c The project—dissertation is presented as an extended written response. Candidates can structure their dissertation in a variety of ways and may also demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. You should credit relevant and appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding wherever they appear in the dissertation.
- d The word count for the project—dissertation is 3,000-4,000 words (excluding references and appendices). The word count is submitted with the completed dissertation. If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty is applied. Do not award marks for the content of references and appendices.

## Detailed marking instructions

Skills, knowledge and understanding	Overview of marking
<b>Knowledge and understanding (KU) (20 marks)</b>	Award KU marks for the candidate's ability to select, use and reference a wide range of relevant sources and present consistently relevant, accurate and in-depth KU in order to achieve the aims of the dissertation.
<b>Analysis (15 marks)</b>	Award marks for analysis for the candidate's ability to explain and interpret sources and knowledge points accurately and in depth, in order to answer their question or issue.
<b>Evaluation (15 marks)</b>	Award marks for evaluation for the candidate's ability to present and make judgements on arguments and/or counter-arguments, and to present clear, developed and supported conclusions throughout the dissertation.

Skills, knowledge and understanding	15-20	10-14	5-9	0-4
<b>Knowledge and understanding (KU)</b>	Aims are clearly explained.	Aims are explained.	Aims are described.	Aims are stated.
	Aims are fully achieved.	Aims are mainly achieved.	Aims are partially achieved.	Aims are not achieved.
	KU is consistently relevant, accurate and in-depth.	KU is mainly relevant, accurate and in-depth.	KU lacks relevance or accuracy or depth.	KU lacks relevance, accuracy and depth.
	KU is consistently supported by strong research.	KU is supported by some strong research.	KU is inconsistently supported by research.	KU is under-researched.
	Sources are used extensively and referenced throughout.	Sources are used and referenced regularly.	Limited use of sources and/or references.	Sources are not used or referenced sufficiently.
<b>Analysis</b>	12-15	8-11	4-7	0-3
	Analysis is relevant, accurate and in-depth.	Analysis is mainly relevant, accurate and in-depth.	Analysis is mainly relevant and accurate but lacks depth.	Analysis lacks depth and/or relevance.
	Analysis is consistently used to support or develop knowledge and evaluation points.	Analysis is regularly used to support or develop knowledge or evaluation points.	Analysis is inconsistently used to support or develop knowledge or evaluation points.	Analysis is occasionally used to support or develop knowledge or evaluation points.
<b>Evaluation</b>	12-15	8-11	4-7	0-3
	Evaluation involves consistently making judgements on arguments and/or counter-arguments.	Evaluation involves regularly making judgements on arguments and/or counter-arguments.	Evaluation includes brief judgements on arguments and/or counter-arguments.	Evaluation is lacking.
	Evaluation is consistently relevant and in-depth.	Evaluation is mainly relevant and in-depth.	Evaluation is not always relevant and is under-developed.	Conclusions are brief and lack support.
	Clear and supported conclusions are evident throughout the dissertation.	Clear and supported conclusions are evident at times in the dissertation.	Conclusions are evident but lack support at times.	

# Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the project—dissertation for Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies.

This project—dissertation has 50 marks out of a total of 140 marks available for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ carrying out research on a question or issue of your choosing, using a range of sources
- ◆ providing relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge relating to the question or issue you have chosen
- ◆ analysing sources and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or issues
- ◆ evaluating sources and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or issues
- ◆ providing clear and supported conclusions throughout your dissertation

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know if there are any specific conditions for doing this assessment.

In this assessment, you have to:

- ◆ choose a question or issue for your dissertation, either from one of the sections you have been studying or from a religious, moral or philosophical topic of your choice
- ◆ decide on clear aims for your dissertation: think of this as a plan for how you are going to respond to your question or issue through your dissertation
- ◆ carry out research on your chosen question or issue: gather sources from as many different viewpoints as possible, and make a note of where these come from
- ◆ organise your information into a clear structure, based on your aims
- ◆ include in-depth analysis of your sources and viewpoints: explain clearly how they relate to your question or issue
- ◆ include clear, supported evaluation throughout your dissertation: making judgements about the sources and/or viewpoints you use, and supporting these judgements with clear reasons
- ◆ provide an in-depth, clearly supported conclusion to your question or issue

# Administrative information

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Published: September 2025 (version 2.1)

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.1	Amendment made to Detailed marking instructions grid on page 4: The aims sentence in the first row of the table has been split into two sentences so that the achievement of aims is separate.  <b>What you need to do differently</b> There is no change to teaching or marking.	September 2025

Note: you are advised to check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.

## Security and confidentiality

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