



Higher  
Coursework  
Assessment Task



# Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

## Assignment

## 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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# Introduction

This document contains instructions for teachers and lecturers, marking instructions and instructions for candidates for the Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies assignment. You must read it in conjunction with the course specification.

This assignment has 30 marks out of a total of 110 marks available for the course assessment.

This is one of three course assessment components. The other components are question papers.

# Instructions for teachers and lecturers

Candidates produce a resource sheet that they use during the write-up stage of the assessment. This must be no more than 250 words and should not include continuous prose. Images and acronyms count as one word.

Candidates do not gain marks for directly copying **extended** pieces of text or narrative from their resource sheet. However, they can directly copy quotations.

Candidates use the RMPS resource sheet to plan the structure of their assignment and record any sources they intend to use. This helps candidates in the write-up stage to ensure that they use their research to provide a relevant and structured response to their chosen question.

During the final write-up stage, candidates should only have access to their RMPS resource sheet. If a candidate does not submit a resource sheet, a penalty of 6 marks out of the total of 30 marks is applied.

Candidates must specify the question, topic or issue they are addressing. No marks will be awarded if the question, topic or issue has not been stated.

## What this assessment covers

Candidates identify an appropriate religious, moral or philosophical issue, about which there are different points of view, and set an appropriate 'open' question for their assignment.

The assignment assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ **using information from a range of sources** — researching the issue, using a range of sources of information relating to the question
- ◆ **providing relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge relating to the question** — drawing on in-depth knowledge and understanding of the issue in order to address the question
- ◆ **sustaining a clear focus on the question throughout the assignment** — sustaining a clear structure and focus on addressing the question
- ◆ **analysing sources and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or issues** — analysing different sources and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or issues in order to address the question
- ◆ **evaluating sources and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or issues** — evaluating different sources and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or issues in order to address the question
- ◆ **providing an overall reasoned conclusion on the question** — presenting a reasoned and well-structured conclusion

# Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions for the Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies assignment are addressed to the marker. They will also 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 resource sheet is not marked. However, you can refer to the resource sheet to clarify points the candidate has made in their assignment.
- d Marks for *knowledge and understanding* are based on **the candidate's ability to select and use accurate and detailed content**, gathered from a range of sources, in order to address their question.
- e Marks for *analysis* are based on **the candidate's ability to explain and/or interpret** a range of beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or sources relating to their question, and identify the impact and/or consequences and/or implications of issues and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints relating to their question.
- f Marks for *evaluation* are based on **the candidate's ability to make judgements** about beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or sources relating to their question, engage with counter-arguments and/or challenges relating to their question, and provide a reasoned conclusion to their question.

## Marking instructions for the assignment

Skills, knowledge and understanding	Overview of marking	Mark scale	Marking instructions
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	To gain marks for <i>knowledge and understanding</i> , candidates select and use relevant, accurate and detailed content, gathered from a range of sources, in order to address the question.	<b>0-10</b>	<b>Award up to 10 marks</b> for the skilful selection and effective use of knowledge and understanding.
<b>Analysis</b>	To gain marks for <i>analysis</i> , candidates explain and/or interpret a range of beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or sources relating to their question, and identify the impact and/or consequences and/or implications of issues and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints relating to their question.	<b>0-10</b>	<b>Award up to 10 marks</b> for analysing the issue, and maintaining a clear line of focus throughout.
<b>Evaluation</b>	To gain marks for <i>evaluation</i> , candidates make judgements about beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or sources relating to their question, engage with counter-arguments and/or challenges relating to their question, and provide a reasoned conclusion on their question.	<b>0-10</b>	<b>Award up to 10 marks</b> for evaluation which is evident throughout the assignment and consistently focuses on the issue.

## Detailed marking instructions

Mark	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Knowledge and understanding	There is clear evidence that the candidate has drawn together relevant and accurate content from a range of sources.	There is evidence that the candidate has drawn together mostly relevant and accurate content from some specific sources.	There is some evidence that the candidate has drawn together relevant and/or accurate content, but use of sources tends to be general and limited.	There is limited evidence of relevant and/or accurate content, and use of sources is limited.	There is little evidence of relevant and/or accurate content, but references to sources are brief and undeveloped.	The assignment lacks evidence of sources and those used lack relevance and accuracy.					
	Knowledge and understanding is consistently detailed/developed, accurate and relevant.	Knowledge and understanding is mostly detailed/developed, accurate and relevant.	Knowledge and understanding has some detail/depth and is accurate and relevant.	Knowledge and understanding has limited depth and is sometimes inaccurate and/or irrelevant.	An attempt at knowledge and understanding, but lacks depth and is inaccurate and irrelevant.	Knowledge and understanding is not accurate or relevant.					
Analysis	The analysis identifies specific issue(s) clearly related to the question, and these are explained in depth. There is a clear line of focus throughout the assignment.	The analysis identifies specific issue(s) related to the question, but the depth is uneven at times.	The analysis identifies some specific issue(s) that are mostly related to the question, and there is insufficient depth and explanation of them.	The analysis identifies general issue(s) related to the question, but explanations are limited.	Analysis is attempted, but not clearly related to the question and explanations are limited.	Analysis is not evident and/or not related to the question.					

Mark	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
	There is clear evidence of the candidate's ability to explain and/or interpret a range of beliefs/viewpoints/sources relating to their question.		There is evidence of the candidate's ability to explain and/or interpret a range of beliefs/viewpoints/sources relating to their question, but analysis lacks depth at times.		There is some evidence of the candidate's ability to explain and/or interpret a range of beliefs/viewpoints/sources relating to their question, but analysis is often general in nature.		There is limited evidence of the candidate's ability to explain and/or interpret a range of beliefs/viewpoints/sources relating to their question, and any analysis is sometimes inaccurate and/or irrelevant.		There has been an attempt to explain and/or interpret a range of beliefs/viewpoints/sources, but this is not clearly related to the question, and/or inaccurate and/or irrelevant.		There is no evidence of understanding the question.
Evaluation	Evaluation of different beliefs/viewpoints/sources on the issue, with judgements and counter-arguments that are relevant to the question.		The evaluation is mostly clearly reasoned, with judgements or counter-arguments that are mostly relevant to the question.		Evaluation is mainly valid but not consistently and/or clearly reasoned, and there are some judgements or counter-arguments that are relevant to the question.		Evaluation is present at times, but is lacking in relevance and/or supporting reasons.		There is an attempt at evaluation, but this lacks validity, relevance and support.		There is a lack of judgement on the question.
	Conclusions are evident throughout the assignment, and a clearly supported, relevant judgement on the question is made at the end of the assignment.		Mostly clear conclusions have been drawn throughout the assignment, and a supported, relevant judgement on the question is made at the end of the assignment.		Conclusions have been drawn but they lack support and/or relevance at times.		There has been an attempt to draw brief conclusions but they lack support and/or relevance.		Conclusions may be restricted to closing comments.		There is no attempt to draw conclusions on the question.



# Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the assignment for Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies. This assignment has 30 marks out of a total of 110 marks available for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ using information from a range of sources\*
- ◆ providing relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge relating to the question
- ◆ sustaining a clear line of argument throughout
- ◆ analysing sources and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or issues
- ◆ evaluating sources and/or beliefs and/or viewpoints and/or issues
- ◆ providing a reasoned conclusion on the question

\* Sources can include, but are not limited to, quotations, references to textbooks, philosophical theories, religious or non-religious individuals or organisations, documentaries, case studies.

You decide on your question and complete your research independently, with some guidance from your teacher or lecturer. You must specify the question, topic or issue you are addressing. No marks will be awarded if the question, topic or issue has not been stated.

You then produce a resource sheet, which you use in the 'write-up' stage of the assessment. If you do not submit a resource sheet, you will lose 6 marks.

The resource sheet should help you to provide a relevant and structured response to your question. Your resource sheet must not contain more than 250 words and must not include continuous prose ('chunks' or paragraphs from your assignment). It can include a paragraph plan, quotations or other sources, and you **can** copy quotations directly from your resource sheet. You then complete a 'write-up' under supervised conditions, in 1 hour 30 minutes.

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

In this assessment, you have to:

- ◆ decide on an 'open' question which you can use to debate a religious, moral or philosophical issue
- ◆ have a clear structure throughout your essay, which focuses on answering the question you have decided on
- ◆ use information about the religious, moral or philosophical issue you are focusing on
- ◆ use different viewpoints and/or beliefs about the question – these can be religious and/or non-religious
- ◆ include sources as evidence for these viewpoints and/or beliefs
- ◆ analyse these sources, and clearly explain how they relate to the question
- ◆ analyse the issues related to the question

- ♦ evaluate the viewpoints/beliefs — say whether you agree or disagree with them, and give clear reasons why
- ♦ provide a clear, reasoned conclusion to your question

# Administrative information

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Penalty for non-submission of resource sheet added to 'Instructions for teachers and lecturers' and 'Instructions for candidates' section.	July 2019
3.0	Amendments made to marking grid.	August 2019
4.0	<p>One change made to 'Instructions for teachers and lecturers' and 'Instructions for candidates' sections: 'Candidates must specify the question, topic or issue they are addressing. No marks will be awarded if the question, topic or issue has not been stated.'</p> <p><b>What you need to do differently</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Ensure candidates state their question, topic or issue on their assignment. No marks will be awarded if this is not stated.</li><li>◆ Make sure you use the most-up-to-date version of this coursework assessment task and course specification with candidates.</li></ul>	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

This document can be used by SQA approved centres for the assessment of National Courses and not for any other purpose.

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