



GCE A level

1349/01A

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RS4 HE - Religion and Human Experience

Compulsory Unit (A2)

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES FOR UNIT 4

FROM A.M. 11 January 2012

Candidates select one of three themes: Religious Authority, **or** Religious Experience, **or** Life, Death and Life After Death. The theme may be investigated with reference to one or more religions, and may draw on ideas from any of the other units studied. Teachers may choose to teach one or more of the topics in the usual way, or to support students in their own explorations of the topic, or a combination of the two. The investigation can be done in much the same way as traditional coursework, giving opportunity to develop Key Skills. In the examination a very broad question is set on central aspects of each theme. Candidates answer one question, which will allow them to use selected parts of their prepared material appropriate to the focus of the question. This should be an extended answer, double the length normally expected on an A2 paper. The question will be marked out of a total of 75 marks.

One important point about the nature of the task is the amount of freedom it gives to candidates to draw upon material from a wide range of sources. There is no restriction on the use of material from units they have not studied or on the use of concepts not explicitly mentioned in the specification at all. Credit will be given for any valid ideas, examples and illustrations that are relevant and appropriate to the question and to the candidate's line of reasoning.

This is not to say that candidates must attempt a grand tour of the world of religion or that those who do will be marked more highly. Examiners will be looking for accuracy, relevance, coherence, qualities of reasoning, judgement and skills of communication in the answers and for a balance of breadth and depth. Candidates who deal with, say, concepts of authority in **one** religious tradition will be neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by comparison with those who write of **two** or more traditions. **Candidates should be advised to state clearly at the beginning of their answer the parameters within which they intend to write.**

Some relevant key concepts and issues will have been taught and explored in dealing with the main content of other units studied. However, these do need to be augmented, developed and focused by reference to other material such as the listed exemplars in the RS 4 content.

The role of teachers in relation to the RS4 task is to:

- teach the topics and stimulate interest in them
- advise candidates and guide their choice of topic
- explain to candidates the specification content, the requirements for this unit and the level descriptors by which their answers will be assessed
- help candidates to identify key questions and find appropriate resources
- assist them in planning and organising their work
- discuss ideas and examples with them, and perhaps arrange class discussions of alternative points of view.

In other words, it is legitimate to give the assistance that is consistent with professional responsibility so long as the work that candidates prepare and present is, at the end of the process, their own.

Students will find Owen's *Religious Authority*, Dossett's *Religious Experience* and Lawson's *Life, Death and Life after Death*, which were written particularly for this Unit, together with the range of exemplars provided in the specification, a sound starting point for their studies.

N.B. Candidates will not be allowed to take into the final examination any written notes or copies of the Bible or any other sacred texts.

Candidates will be required to answer **one** question. The attached broad areas of questioning are given below. The specific question will be provided for the examination.

1. Religious Authority

You must show knowledge and understanding of the use of sacred writings as a source of religious authority and be able to evaluate how far sacred writings are considered to be the most significant form of authority for religious believers.

2. Religious Experience

You must show knowledge and understanding of the distinctive features of religious experiences and be able to evaluate whether a religious experience is only of value to the individual who experiences it.

3. Life, Death and Life after Death

You must show knowledge and understanding of specific religious teachings about the nature of life after death and be able to evaluate whether there is compelling evidence for believing in life after death.