



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES (NEW)
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2009

Introduction

Summer 2009 is the first award of the new AS. For all specifications there have been changes to the content of the units, and in many new marking criteria have been introduced and unit weightings altered. Also in some subjects there has been the withdrawal of internal assessment. However, the biggest change in most subjects has been the reduction from a three to a two unit assessment.

In moving to the new specification awarding bodies have sought to maintain the overall United Kingdom standard for AS, as measured by the proportion of candidates achieving grade A and by the proportion achieving a pass grade in each subject. Comparability between 'old' and 'new' specifications is measured in terms of the overall subject outcome and not in terms of unit outcomes. Many of the units in the new specifications will bear little relation to those in the old specifications. Even where they are very similar, it is quite likely that outcomes will be different. The expectation is that the number of grade As at unit level will decrease in a specification where the number of units is reduced, whilst the number of passes will increase. The overall cash-in outcome, however, will be maintained. These same principles will apply to the new A level where a six unit assessment is reduced to a four unit assessment.

Statistical Information

This booklet contains summary details for each unit: number entered; maximum mark available; mean mark achieved; grade ranges. *N.B. These refer to 'raw marks' used in the initial assessment, rather than to the uniform marks reported when results are issued.*

Annual Statistical Report

The annual *Statistical Report* (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES (New)
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2009
Advanced Subsidiary

Principal Examiner: Mr Karl Lawson B.A
Head of Religious Studies, Denbigh High School.

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1-2 CS	491	90	46.5

Grade Ranges

A	67
B	57
C	47
D	37
E	27

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

RS1-2 CS

INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

General

Overall the quality of responses rose slightly from the January paper – with many candidates producing quality responses, particularly to questions 1 and 4. One slightly worrying trend in this paper was the significant minority of candidates who attempted all four questions – inevitably leading to a reduction in quality responses. Centres would be advised to remind candidates to read the instructions on the examination paper which clearly states that they should only be answering two questions. It would appear that the arrival of the supporting text was put to good use by centres who had very patiently waited for its publication – as reference to much of its text was evident in many of the better responses given by candidates.

- Q.1** (a) There were a wide variety of responses to this question. Too many candidates failed to take note of the demands of the question, which was focussed on the arguments surrounding the issue, and instead produced a (presumably) prepared essay on euthanasia which included much irrelevant (for this question) information on the various types of euthanasia. More able candidates were able to link this information in a creditworthy way by using these types to either support or deny the arguments for and against euthanasia. Good answers used plenty of examples e.g. Dianne Pretty, Christopher Reeve, Natasha Richardson, Reg Crew. Most candidates failed to engage with the way modern medical technology keeps people alive unnaturally, and at times against their will, but the majority were able to accurately identify different types of euthanasia, and to explore the arguments for and against different types effectively.
- (b) Some weaker candidates simply repeated material in part a with little reflection on the term 'religious believers'. Some other weaker candidates stated that religious believers should always oppose euthanasia, offered two or three reasons, and left it at that. Middle range candidates tended to write in two discrete sections 'religious believers should oppose' and 'religious believers should not oppose', without actually formulating an argument or evaluating the status of the different views they were listing.
- Q.2** (a) Answers to this question were generally quite poor, as too many candidates misunderstood the focus of the question ('religious broadcasting'). Many candidates simply related examples from the Vicar of Dibley, the Simpsons, and Dot in Eastenders. This was clearly not what the question required and such candidates did not gain much credit for their responses. However there were some excellent responses produced from those candidates who did comply with the demands of the question set, and who also appeared to have had access to the supporting text, as references to programmes such as 'Songs of Praise', 'The Heaven and Earth Show', 'Highway', etc were used to good effect to address the question.
- (b) There were some excellent answers to this question focused on stereotyping in the media, Islamophobia in the media, negative caricatures of religious people in soaps, the biases of programme makers, and so on. Weak answers tended to focus on the fact the t.v. is widespread, it presents things in a more accessible visual way than books, and is way more interesting than church. Better answers that engaged with the question explored ways in which communal religious experience, face to face access with religious authorities and engagement with scripture was central to religion. Some of the irrelevant information included in part a was salvaged to this part of the question.

Q.3 Fundamentalism:

- (a) This was generally poorly answered with much confusion being demonstrated as to the meaning of key terms. Weaker answers concentrated purely on the media-centric negative examples of fundamentalism and were unable to accurately identify the causes and characteristics of fundamentalism. A few candidates adequately met the demands of the question and were thus able to access some of the higher marks available.
- (b) Very few candidates were able to construct a coherent response to this question. Centres are advised to spend time discussing this key issue with their candidates and may wish to get the candidates to research some of the key indicators evident in modern society that contribute to this debate.

NRMs:

- (a) This was largely well answered, with both causes and characteristics being addressed. The difference between strong and weak candidates was mostly evidenced by the amount they wrote, and the detail in the examples used. Even average candidates referred to scholars. Weak candidates confused their examples, including much erroneous material about sects and cults which was confused and generally ill informed.
- (b) Much of the comment made regarding the response to fundamentalism is also relevant here. Weaker candidates had less than balanced views of NRMs, tending to see them all as evil and brainwashing, and some had rather bizarre apocalyptic visions of the whole nation being imminently brainwashed into suicide cults. However, stronger candidates on the whole tended to argue that the secularisation thesis was much exaggerated, and NRM membership seems to plateau at low levels. They also showed a balanced, critical, but non-judgemental approach to the subject material that we would expect from students working with the methods and approach of Religious Studies.

- Q.4**
- (a) Responses to this question attracted the full ability range. Weaknesses were either due to the muddling of Freud and Jung, or not much being written. Some also merely related stories about sex without showing how the psychologists' work related to their understanding of religion. Most answers however, were strong, though some passages on Jung did not show how his ideas related to religious belief.
 - (b) Strong answers went beyond the theories of Freud and Jung to explore the idea of psychological explanations in general. They tended to provide less evaluation of Jung. Perhaps this is because they felt there was less to criticise, but positive evaluation should have been part of an answer to this question.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (New)
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2009
Advanced Subsidiary

Principal Examiner: Mr Andrew Pearce, B.D.
SENCO, Pencoed Comprehensive School

Unit Statistics

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Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1-2 ETH	1206	90	43.2

Grade Ranges

A	66
B	55
C	44
D	34
E	24

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION AND ETHICS

General

It appears that the examination with its 'open choice' of questions was accessible to candidates. Some candidates however, failed to recognise the 'key terms' in each question and simply wrote all they knew about a topic - particularly when answering Q's 1(a) and 3 (a). At least one candidate also attempted to answer all four questions, when only two are required. It would be very helpful for examiners if candidates entered the questions they answered on the front of their answer booklet.

- Q.1** (a) Better candidates often to the development of this theory from the works of Aristotle and were able to demonstrate how Aquinas encompassed these ideas into his own theory. For example they stated that everything has a purpose given to it by God and fulfilling that purpose was 'good'. They focussed clearly on the 'deontological' aspect of the theory referring to aspects of the theory such as the precepts and the four types of law. They ere also able to explain the difference between real/apparent goods and interior/exterior acts. Weaker candidates simply wrote all they knew about Natural Law without directly addressing the 'deontological' aspect of the question. They also tended to just list the primary precepts and secondary precepts without placing them in context of the whole theory or being able to link the primary precepts with the secondary ones.
- (b) Better candidates made reference to the fact that scientific developments, cultural differences and social attitude have impacted upon the relevance of the theory. They could also demonstrate how the structure and clearly defined morals provided by the theory might be of benefit to both individuals and society. Weaker candidates did not focus on the question, but tended to simply give the strengths and weaknesses of the theory.
- Q.2** (a) Better candidates were able to use terminology such as 'consequentialist', 'teleological' and 'relativism' correctly. They understood that the theory was based on the application of agape (selfless love) and were able to place the theory in context between legalism and antinomianism. They were also able to demonstrate an understanding of the principles with clear and appropriate examples. Weaker candidates often simply listed some of the ten principles of the theory, with little understanding or exemplification. 'Positivism' in particular continues to be poorly understood by some candidates. They tended to make brief reference to the fact that this theory was based on 'love', but were unable to state which type of love. Some candidates devoted too much of their answer to providing background information about the 1960s. A small number of candidates confused this theory with Utilitarianism, whilst others confused the term 'relativism' with 'consequentialism'.
- (b) Better candidates noted that there are different denominations within Christianity some of which approve of this theory, whilst others do not. They focussed on the question and gave strong arguments in favour of the statement including references to the life of Jesus and the teachings of St. Paul. They also were also able to show why some religious believers such as fundamentalists or Roman Catholics adopted a more absolutist approach. Such answers tended to include references to the Ten Commandments and the role of Divine Authority as opposed to human subjectivity. Weaker candidates failed to address the question and merely gave some general strengths and weaknesses of Situation Ethics.

- Q.3** (a) Better candidates carefully selected information about Act Utilitarianism and were able to successfully use terminology such as 'hedonist', 'consequentialist', 'telological', and 'relativist'. They were also able to correctly state the 'Principle of Utility' and were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the hedonic calculus with clear examples. Weaker candidates often over simplified Bentham's theory by stating he just promoted happiness. A surprising number of these candidates were unable to list the criteria of the hedonic calculus or show a clear understanding of these criteria - 'remoteness', 'purity', 'richness' and 'extent' were often misunderstood. Some candidates also wrote everything they knew about Utilitarianism including Mill's version of the theory, which was irrelevant.
- (b) Better candidates were able to demonstrate with examples, how the 'Principle of Utility' could be used to cause injustice – allowing the minority to suffer as part of the outcome, the subjectivity of the term 'happiness' – it means different things to different people and the inability to successfully predict the consequences of an act. They were also able to exemplify how the theory considers everyone's happiness in its initial assessment, judges each situation separately, that this theory is seen as 'democratic' and the 'greatest happiness for the greatest number' principle promotes justice via the outcome of an act. Weaker candidates often stated that the theory does not consider the minority – which is incorrect as it does in its initial assessment, but allows them to suffer as part of the outcome of an act. Some candidates also failed to address the question and merely gave some general strengths and weaknesses of Situation Ethics.
- Q.4** (a) Better candidates were able to recognise the diversity of opinion that exists within many religions on this topic. They were able to support their comments with various forms of religious authority including religious leaders, sacred texts and religious tradition. Such candidates were also able to refer to the ethical theories supported by some believers such as Natural Law and Situation Ethics and to the importance of the commitment made during a wedding. In addition to this they were able to refer to general principles which condemn adultery such as the damage caused to partners, family and society. Weaker candidates often strayed from the focus of the question into areas such as sex before marriage or homosexuality with no direct link to the question. They also tended to give very basic reasons for adultery being wrong e.g. it breaks the marriage vows, but failed to explain how this was the case. Some candidates also incorrectly stereo-typed certain denominations by stating for example that the Anglican church accepted adultery.
- (b) Better candidates were able to recognise the advantages of a relativistic approach to this issue – it considers the situation people find themselves in, allows people to make choices for themselves, it considers what is the most loving outcome (Situation Ethics) or what will make those involved happy (Utilitarianism). They were also able to highlight its weaknesses – it provides no clear structure for individuals or society, allows absolutist religious codes to be broken, it places greater importance on 'free will' than Divine Authority, etc. Weaker candidates failed to understand the term 'relativistic' some referring to it as 'realistic' and subsequently were unable to focus on the question. Other candidates simply attempted to give reasons for and against adultery and as a result only some of their response was salvageable.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (New)
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2009
Advanced Subsidiary

Principal Examiner: Mr Karl Lawson, B.A.
Head of Religious Studies, Denbigh High School.

Unit Statistics

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Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1-2 PHIL	1225	90	46.9

Grade Ranges

A	67
B	56
C	45
D	34
E	24

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

RS1-2 PHIL

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

General

Centres will find it useful to stress to candidates the importance of timing and the marks available for a question as there were significant examples of students writing less than a page for a part a answer and thus leaving it under-developed. However, writing 3 or 4 pages of accurate detail for a part a question. Though nice to see the detail in part b students were not maximising their potential by losing so many marks on part a questions. A significant number of candidates included the strengths and weaknesses of the various arguments and evaluation material in their part a essays, resulting in a lack of detail in their actual explanation of the theories. There were also frequent spelling errors of commonly used words like: existence instead of existence, argument instead of argument. Centres would also be well advised to remind candidates that they should offer a conclusion to all of their part b answers, in order to fully satisfy the demands of the question as it would appear many were ignoring the question set and just reeled off a pre-set list of strengths and weaknesses.

- Q.1** (a) Most candidates were able to explain Aquinas' version of the cosmological argument and his 3 Ways. Some explained all five ways. Although explanations were often accurate fewer candidates gave examples to support their explanations. Motion and causation were understood better than the argument from contingency. Some candidates mixed up all three ways and were unable to give clear explanations of the differences. The Kalam argument was the most common second version given. Knowledge of this ranged from the very basic to the excellent, with good use being made of Hilbert's Hotel example, Craig's piles of books example and Xeno's paradox. More basic answers were able to indicate that it derived from Islamic scholarship but were not clear about what the argument stated other than that it was something to do with infinity. A few used Leibniz' Principle of Sufficient Reason as the second version, but this was more often cited in support of the other versions. This argument was not clearly understood in most cases.
- (b) Most candidates drew successfully on arguments from Hume, Kant and Russell to attempt this question. Better candidates could also refer to scientific objections to the argument. Candidates generally found it easier to conclude that the argument does not demonstrate the probability of God's existence and arguments in favour of the view tended to be weaker and less well understood. Better candidates made use of Ockham's razor and the idea of a cumulative case. Many candidates simply juxtaposed different theoretical positions rather than actually evaluating the arguments they presented.
- Q.2** (a) Most refer to Paley's 'complex' watch rather than the elements of Paley's thinking (order, purpose, intelligent design). Not all carried this (now weak) analogy over to the world and God. Perhaps because of this there were frequent lapses into describing God as 'creator' rather than 'designer'. The ability to define and explain design qua regularity and design qua purpose - with examples - seemed better as was an understanding of the aesthetic argument demonstrating, with examples, that these were not necessary to survival, hence being a feature of divine design. The Anthropic argument was widely understood and in some cases well developed. Likewise the modern irreducible argument for intelligent design. Many referred to Aquinas but not all described what his teleological argument was, still less accurately. Weaker candidates thought Paley had invented the teleological argument. One candidate insisted that Brown said 'there's a hole just the right size in the ozone layer'!

- (b) Some very good answers seen that used the aesthetic argument as evidence against evolution and evaluated the relative merits of the two effectively. Hume's criticisms were widely used, as was Kant's argument that order is mind-imposed. Better candidates engaged with the idea of persuasiveness and considered who the argument would persuade. Some candidates simply listed Hume's criticisms with very little assessment.
- Q.3** (a) Too many candidates stuck to the basics here because they also tried to cover the strengths and weaknesses of each theodicy rather than explaining the theodicy in full or they wrote long introductions focusing on the problem of evil before actually starting to explain the theodicies. Weaker candidates mixed up elements of the two theodicies. In terms of the Augustinian theodicy, most could relate the argument to the Fall, although some could not explain the significance of this. Better candidates were able to explain the ideas of original sin and seminal presence and the concept of evil as a privation of good. They also understood the concept of redemption through Christ and linked the theodicy to natural and moral evil. Weaker candidates used the terminology but did not explain what it meant or its significance in terms of the theodicy. The Irenaean theodicy was usually described as a soul-making theodicy and most candidates understood the significance of free will. Better candidates were able to explain the significance of the image/likeness distinction and the concept of universal salvation. Hick's development of the theory was used effectively with the concept of epistemic distance and further development in purgatory. Fewer candidates were able to explain why free will is necessary and why exactly this theodicy justifies God.
- (b) Some candidates just wrote about the inconsistent triad and natural and moral evil, as if it was a set question, no application. Some ignored the word suffering. Some used good case studies on suffering and how it could benefit. The majority were ready to attack God's omnibenevolence. There was good reference and application, by the more able candidates, of both process and protest theology.
- Q.4** (a) Candidates did not on the whole appear as well prepared for this as they did for the other questions. Better answers used the concepts of James, Bonaventure and Happold with clear examples from the lives of various mystics to illustrate these. Weaker answers were usually able to list James' four concepts but could not necessarily explain these. Where examples were used, it tended to be potted biographies of various mystics e.g. Teresa of Avila (referred to as Mother Teresa by several candidates), St John of the Cross, Rumi and Hildegard of Bingen. Many candidates referred to their mystical experiences only in passing and did not relate these to the descriptions of mysticism they had given earlier. Some candidates appeared to be under the impression that all religious experiences are mystic ones, and used examples of prayer, healings and conversion as mystic experiences.
- (b) Better answers here contrasted mystic experiences with the experiences of most believers and argued that religious belief has many other sources, but that mysticism could strengthen belief for individuals. They were able to assess the alternative explanations offered for mystic experiences and come to appropriate conclusions. Weaker candidates tended to refer to religious experience in general rather than focusing on mystical experiences. They did not engage with the idea of belief being 'totally dependent' on mystical experience. Some candidates read the question the wrong way round and assessed whether mystical experience is dependent on religious belief, arguing fairly successfully for and against this assertion in some cases.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (New)
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2009
Advanced Subsidiary

Principal Examiner: Rev. Gwynn ap Gwilym, M.A. (Wales), M.A. (Oxon). M.Phil (Wales)
Language Officer for the Church in Wales

Unit Statistics

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Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1-2 BS	102	90	38.5

Grade Ranges

A	66
B	55
C	44
D	34
E	24

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RS1-2 BS

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES

SECTION A:

THERE WERE TOO FEW CANDIDATES ENTERED FOR THIS UNIT TO ALLOW THE EXAMINER TO MAKE ANY MEANINGFUL COMMENTS.

SECTION B: Introduction to the New Testament

General

The general standard was mediocre. The advent of a new Specification heralded no improvement in grammar or spelling: King Herod's name, for instance, was variously spelled as 'Herold', 'Harrod' or even 'Harold' – one of the same kin, perhaps, as the many 'angles' that seem to have featured in Christ's birth. There was also much unintentional arrogance, with many candidates explaining 'what Jesus was trying to say', as if they knew better. Where candidates excelled, it was in Questions 1 and 4 rather than in the other two.

- Q.1** (a) Most answers could mention at least some of the differences. Weaker candidates were often confused and there was a general tendency to omit any reference to the Lucan hymns. There were, however, a good number of responses, mainly from one centre, whose very detailed comparison revealed a high level of teaching and learning.
- (b) Many were content simply to put forward the simplistic argument that more agreement might be expected on such a significant event. A number argued that harmonisation was feasible by synchronising the accounts (for example, the angel appearing to both Joseph and Mary). Only a handful of the stronger candidates argued that the differing theological emphases of Matthew and Luke supplement and enrich one another.
- Q.2** (a) This question was not well answered. What was expected was a brief definition of Form Criticism, followed by some examples of how it is applied to the text of the parables. In the event, many candidates completely ignored Form Criticism and gave a simple summary and/or explanation of one parable or more. Others showed awareness of Form Criticism, but understood it more as a weapon to discredit the parables than as a tool to ascertain their authenticity. Both approaches were given some credit.
- (b) The point of the question was understood by most candidates. The most perceptive were able to take a holistic view of the issue, asserting that divine revelation is part both of the teaching of Jesus and the subsequent interpretation of the church.
- Q.3** (a) Again, what was expected was a brief definition of Redaction Criticism, followed by some examples of how it is applied to the gospel accounts of Jesus' miracles. Again, however, many candidates completely ignored Redaction Criticism and gave a simple summary of one miracle or more, sometimes explaining their types or purposes. This approach was given some credit. Very occasionally there was a response that demonstrated good understanding of the topic.
- (b) There were better answers here. Weaker candidates tended to agree with the contention on the basis of science and/or demythologisation. Stronger candidates realised that dismissing Jesus' miracles could lead to the undermining of the Resurrection, the foundation of the Christian faith.

- Q.4** (a) A minority wrote on the Resurrection. Although the Mark Scheme states specifically that 'fine detail is not to be expected', as in Question 1, a good number of candidates, mainly from one centre, demonstrated an amazing grasp of such detail. A few were able to point out significant differences not only within the Synoptic accounts but also between them and John. On the whole, the question was satisfactorily answered by most of those who attempted it.
- (b) Again, there were many balanced responses that outlined the case both for and against Jesus' body having been stolen by the disciples, the Jewish or Roman authorities or Joseph of Arimathea.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (New)
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2009
Advanced Subsidiary

Principal Examiner: Rev. Gwynn ap Gwilym, M.A. (Wales), M.A. (Oxon). M.Phil (Wales)
Language Officer for the Church in Wales

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1-2 CHR	136	90	38.5

Grade Ranges

A	66
B	55
C	45
D	35
E	25

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY

General

The general standard was no more than adequate, and there were few very high marks. Candidates often failed to read both parts of the question before embarking on their response, and included in part (a) material that belonged properly in part (b), leaving them with little to say in (b). There were some worrying tendencies. Almost all candidates from one Catholic centre distinguished between Christians and Protestants. There were also candidates from several centres who appeared to believe that Jesus was reincarnated. One wrote that 'the Virgin Mary conceived Jesus exactly nine months after his death'. There can be no excuse for such misunderstandings at this level.

- Q.1** (a) Generally speaking, this was answered well. Almost all who responded understood the idea of Christ bringing humanity 'at one' with God. One or two of the stronger candidates were able to explain the classical theories of the Atonement, and most could trace its necessity to the Fall.
- (b) Again, there were many good and interesting answers. Most candidates ably contrasted the law of the Old Testament with the grace of the New. Some were able to discern divine mercy even in the judgement of God.
- Q.2** (a) It was well understood that the Catholic Church practises infant baptism, but a great many responses failed to mention the belief in original sin. In the case of Protestants, the tendency was to lump all the leaders together without distinguishing the differences between them. A common error was to state that Zwingli rejected infant baptism. He did not. He challenged both the Catholic and the Anabaptist positions, the first by denying that baptism can wash away sin, and the second by insisting that infants should be baptized because there is only one church and one baptism.
- (b) Most candidates understood the central issue here. The majority argued well against infant baptism. Far fewer gave good arguments in its favour.
- Q.3** (a) There was a clear understanding of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Considerably fewer gave a proper explanation of consubstantiation, and again Protestant leaders were lumped together without much discernment of finer points (e.g. Zwingli's memorialism, Calvin's virtualism). Sweeping statements such as 'Protestants believe in bare memorialism' would gain more credit if candidates could learn to use the word 'some'.
- (b) What was expected was some evaluation of the eucharist, despite different denominational approaches, as the central act of worship which assures all Christians that they are in communion with Christ. Unfortunately, several candidates interpreted the term 'basic significance' in a pejorative way, and thus missed the point of the question.

- Q.4** (a) This was a popular question. A great number of candidates correctly explained what is meant by the Incarnation, but surprisingly few made reference to the New Testament Birth Narratives or to the Logos in John or to the Creeds. Too much time was spent on *practices*, which belonged in (b), and/or on unnecessary descriptions of Advent and Epiphany. Many misinterpreted the term Immaculate Conception. According to Catholic dogma, the term refers neither to Christ's conception in Mary's womb (that is the Virgin Birth) nor to Mary herself being conceived through the Holy Spirit in the way Jesus was (that is incorrect). It means simply that Mary was conceived without original sin. It is therefore irrelevant in any discussion of the Incarnation.
- (b) Many candidates picked up marks here. Some, however, seemed to misunderstand the word 'secular' and wrote about multi-cultural participation in the festival rather than the modern consumerism that is associated with it.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (New)
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2009
Advanced Subsidiary

Principal Examiner: Mr Huw Dylan Jones, B.D.
Head of Religious Studies, Ysgol Y Berwyn, Y Bala.

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1-2 ER	927	90	52.3

Grade Ranges

A	69
B	58
C	47
D	37
E	27

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

INTRODUCTION TO EASTERN RELIGIONS

General

Generally the overall standard was good which demonstrates clearly the high standard of teaching of this module in most centres. Although a number of papers were very poor, there were many excellent papers at the top end of the scale which showed great depth of knowledge and understanding. Better candidates certainly benefited from having more time and most candidates benefited from being given a free choice of questions rather than having to answer a compulsory question. However, some weaknesses seem to have been transferred from the old to the new specification with some candidates choosing to describe instead of explaining and answering how instead of why. It is of the utmost importance that centres familiarise themselves with the definitions of the trigger words used on the examination paper. Other candidates failed to answer the question as set while others did not read the question carefully enough. The knowledge and understanding questions continue to be answered better than the evaluation questions.

It was of concern to note that there were a number of candidates who answered parts of the questions and not two whole questions. However there was a vast improvement in candidates noting on the front cover which questions they had attempted.

Buddhism

Q.1 (a) This was a very popular question which the majority of candidates chose to answer. However many chose to ignore the trigger word 'examine' and tended to list and describe events without any reference to their significance, e.g. many described the feature of the elephant in the dreams of the Buddha's mother but did not explain why this was significant. There was also a lack of specialist vocabulary in many answers, e.g. when examining to the Four Sights few candidates referred to what Gautama learnt about anicca, dukha and anatta from them. Better candidates explained the significance of each stage and their importance in the life of the Buddha and to his teaching.

One problem that arose from this question was that candidates tried to discuss all the events listed in the specification, maybe because they thought they could not gain the higher levels without doing so. The result was that candidates spent too much time on this question and therefore disadvantaged themselves with the rest of the paper. In such questions there is no need to discuss every event in the Buddha's life in order to reach the higher levels.

(b) Generally centres had prepared candidates well for this kind of question. Better candidates discussed how the other events in the life of the Buddha were equally important and gave a good setting and relevance for his teaching. They were also able to relate the life of the Buddha before renunciation and the generation of good karma to the question, as well as the event of the enlightenment. Others were able to use other aspects of the specification referring to the importance of the enlightenment and the life of the Buddha within the Theravada and Mahayana traditions. However, some candidates merely talked about the enlightenment which did not really answer the question whilst others concentrated on one side of the argument and did not try to form a balanced argument.

- Q.2** (a) This was also a very popular question and generally well answered. Many followed a four paragraph structure - one for each part of the wheel of life. Candidates were most successful when explaining the three poisons and the karmic circles. The main weakness was that many candidates described the wheel rather than explaining its symbolism. I would also have expected to see a higher level of specialist vocabulary. e.g. Bhavacakra, Pratitya Samutpada, samsara, etc. It was also worrying that candidates from a number of centres talked about the survival of the soul and our bodies as shells for the soul. This is not correct in Buddhism and reflects Hindu belief.
- (b) The answers to this question were rather confused. Many did not realise that Buddhists do not believe in a soul. There was huge misunderstanding about reincarnation and rebirth and the distinctions of Buddhist belief were not clear. Many were confused because they associated life after death with the Christian idea of heaven and therefore maintained that since Buddhists do not believe in such a place, they do not believe in life after death. Better candidates were able to discuss such ideas as the Buddha's rejection of nihilism, paranirvana, the six realms and Pure Land Buddhism.
- Q.3** (a) Generally well answered. Some candidates wrote much about the history of the sangha and others were confused with the three refuges. Stronger candidates were able to discuss the 227 rules, the generation of karma, the ordination ceremonies, the daily life of the monk together with the creation of the ideal life for enlightenment.
- (b) There was often an imbalance in the answers to this question. Candidates could refer to the sangha preserving the teaching of the Buddha, helping Buddhists to achieve enlightenment, teaching meditation, gaining good karma by helping the community and creating an environment without the pressures of everyday life. However when trying to give an opposing view candidates often strayed away from the question and discussed which of the three jewels was most important. Others became bogged down in detailed description of the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Q.4** (a) Some centres had clearly prepared well for a question on puja. The answers showed very good knowledge and understanding referring to the meaning of puja and then discussing features such as offering flowers, incense, water etc and showing awareness of different practices within different Buddhist traditions such as the use of mudra, mantra, mandala etc. However some did not examine but chose to describe and others associated puja directly with meditation and referred to the importance of meditation, describing the different types.
- (b) Many candidates did not fully grasp the meaning of the question. Many were not sure of what worship is and therefore found it difficult to evaluate the statement in the question. Others described how puja was worship but struggled with the counterargument. Many centres seemed to interpret the question as whether the Buddha was a god/man and therefore to be worshipped. Stronger candidates looked at other aspects of worship in a balanced answer.

Hinduism

- Q.1** (a) This was not a very popular question. Some candidates misunderstood the question completely and described the features of various Hindu gods. Most of the answers tended to focus on either monotheism or polytheism. There was very little reference to monism or henotheism.
- (b) Answers tended to be superficial in nature without really focusing on the question. Although there were references to Rama and Sita they were not used to discuss the demands of the question – the advantages and disadvantages of a personal or impersonal god.
- Q.2** (a) A very popular question and well answered. Candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the concepts of varna, ashrama and dharma. Of the three dharma was the weakest – there was very little on the cosmos and relationship between dharma and karma. The main weakness of the answers was that they focused on the three parts separately rather than discussing the concept as a whole. There was also a lack of explanation at times.
- (b) Arguments tended to be superficial – covering beliefs and worship against caste and dharma – but there was no real detail. Some argued that varnashramadharm fitted into the existing social structure anyway and others argued that deities were other aspects held to be important as well as ritual and worship.
- Q.3** (a) Generally candidates had good knowledge and understanding of Ganesh and Kali, Ganesh being the better answered of the two. The main weakness was that the answers tended to be too descriptive, focusing too much on the stories associated with the two rather than explaining their features. Some candidates confused Kali with Durga. There were also a significant number of consistent elements that were curious in answers eg mice, rats and goats with Ganesh.
- (b) Centres had obviously prepared well for this type of question. Many candidates referred to society and how the gods reflected this. Examples were used well and there was good discussion about how all gods are part of Brahman anyway. The better candidates referred to the Trimurti, Krishna and Rama as well as Vaishnavism and Shaivism on the one hand and independent strong goddesses like Kali and Durga, role-models such as Sita and Parvati and the concept of Shakti on the other. Some candidates focused too much on the stories about the gods/goddesses rather than giving more concise arguments. Sometimes candidates were also confused about male and female elements of the gods.
- Q.4** (a) There were some very thorough explanations of the significance of puja. Candidates related puja well to the deity/avatar. There were good references to puja practices in the temple and home – waking and preparing the murti, offerings, lamps, music and explaining the significance – giving things back to the deity, the bell to begin puja and sole concentration. However there was an absence of explanation of the significance of these practices in many answers.
- (b) Although some candidates argued about love and commitment being part of puja they failed to relate this to religious experience. Others referred to it as being part of dharma. Some confused comparing puja as a religious experience in Hinduism with other religions. However better candidates argued that it was a religious experience and concentrated upon that.

Sikhism

- Q.1** (a) There was an imbalance in many answers which concentrated mostly on the religious not social elements. Although it was acceptable to refer to Guru Nanak's life in its context, many candidates described his life in too much detail rather than examining the social and religious conditions. Better candidates mentioned the idea of caste and the reason why the langar was formed was to do with the belief in equality. They were able to discuss the different aspects of the background and explain why they were important.
- (b) This question was poorly answered by some candidates who chose to cover all religions rather than Hinduism and Islam which were the obvious choices. Better candidates did focus on particular elements of teaching which firstly came from Hinduism and those which came from Islam – this was a blend of accepted and rejected elements. There was some confused discussion about Christianity and Judaism by some candidates. Weaker candidates tended to write statements such as “In general Guru Nanak believed in other things” which was not specific enough. Stronger candidates were able to give examples and argue in a balanced way.
- Q.2** (a) The answers to this question covered all sorts of equality – gender, age, religion. Good reference was made to equality in worship, with quotes from Guru Nanak, equality in the langar, etc.
- (b) The answers to this question largely focused on whether women were equal or not and did not look at other beliefs or even the idea of other groups being equal. There was a tremendous amount of repetition of the answers given in part (a). Better candidates argued in a balanced and addressed all forms of equality as well as important Sikh teachings eg service and love of God being as important as equality.
- Q.3** (a) Answers tended to focus too much on history. Arguments about the role of the Khalsa stated that it showed God was in their life but were often not supported by examples. There was sometimes vagueness about Sikhs being distinctive and some candidates confused the symbolism of the 5 'ks'. Other candidates concentrated far too much on the story of the Panj Piare. Better candidates appreciated the importance of the Khalsa and the 5 'ks'.
- (b) Many argued that belief was more important than clothes. They considered belief in one God, sewa and the love of God against the 5'ks'. However some candidates did not see the theme of dress more widely or as an identity issue, rather than for the individual characteristics.
- Q.4** (a) The main weakness of the answers to this question was that they tended to list what happened during worship in the Gurdwara rather than explaining why it was important. The full range of events from within a service were not fully utilised and therefore answers tended to stick to reading, hymns, the lack of shoes and the langar meal afterwards.
- (b) Many candidates tended to concentrate on the idea of the Langar and did not mention Karah Prashad as a form of eating that expresses equality. Many answers therefore involved a lot of repetition of the same points. Better candidates compared the theme of eating with other forms of worship.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (New)
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2009
Advanced Subsidiary

Principal Examiner: Mr P Jacques, B.A. Dip. R.S.
Visiting Lecturer, University of Sunderland and University of Durham.

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1-2 WR	446	90	48.0

Grade Ranges

A	67
B	56
C	46
D	36
E	26

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

INTRODUCTION TO WESTERN RELIGIONS

General

It is slightly disappointing to report that examiners felt, in general, a lower standard of performance from candidates in this examination compared with the first examination of this new specification in January 2009.

The reasons for this appear to be as follows:-

- Candidates do not read questions carefully enough. Parts (a) and (b) require candidates to demonstrate different skills and use basic information in a different way – there is no credit to be gained from rewriting the same material in both (a) and (b). Where candidates failed to score high marks, it was invariably due to a lack of understanding rather than a weak knowledge base.
- There was evidence from a significant number of scripts that candidates had not used the time allocation to their own benefit. Too much time was spent on one question, which was generally done very well but left little time to achieve good marks on the second question.
- Candidates at this level are expected to demonstrate some grasp of specialist vocabulary – this was often not the case this year.
- Many candidates' responses lacked attention to detail. There were too many general comments rather than specific accurate information.

Section A: Introduction to Islam

- Q.1** (a) Very few candidates showed any depth of knowledge or understanding of this issue. Too many responses were solely concerned with the rewards or punishments meted out on the Day of Judgement as outlined in the Qur'an (Surah 56).

Akhirah means for a Muslim that the whole of life is ibadah (worship). A Muslim follows the Five Pillars and the Shari'ah because they know that they will be judged on how far their life has shown submission – the nature of their after life depends on that judgement.

- (b) Only the more able candidates were able to develop their answer along the lines that Islam is in fact a way of life – not just a religion. It could be argued that the teaching about akhirah underpins all Muslim actions. On the other hand, it is important to live life in the 'here and now' – often in a secular society where actions are invariably seen to be more important than beliefs.

Q.2 (a) Although the majority of candidates could show a basic knowledge of the sunna and hadith as the example and teachings of Muhammad, very few were able to explain, in any depth, their importance to Islam.

(b) Much of the evaluative comment was disappointing. Most reasons and arguments were simplistic with very little substance. Many examples merely reflected irrelevant biographical detail!! Candidates were expected to debate why Muhammad is considered a perfect role model and then consider a range of alternative 'guides to life'.

Creditworthy areas should have included:-

- Muhammad as the great exemplar (teacher and human).
- Simple life with compassion and self discipline.
- Servant of Allah with strong faith.
- Actions and sayings.
- Seal of the prophets.

On the other hand

- Muhammad was only a messenger.
- Importance of the Qur'an as a guide to life.
- Importance of the Five Pillars.
- Importance of worship.
- Importance of family life, festivals etc.

Q.3 (a) Although there were some very good answers to this question, there are still those who present a Western based view of jihad rather than an accurate overall understanding of the concept of Islamic jihad. To Muslims, jihad is the constant struggle against sin either in their daily lives or as a worldwide battle against tyranny and oppression to bring freedom and justice. Too many answers ignored the first aspect and concentrated on the idea of military jihad but even then there was very little evidence in these responses of Qur'anic teaching viz.

- Qur'an is specific on the limits of military jihad.
- The aim must be to restore peace.
- Nature should not be damaged.
- Should be led by a spiritual leader.

(b) Although some answers reflected reasonable evaluative comment, most failed to come to terms with the significance of jihad in the modern world and the way that it is generally misunderstood. Even though the concept of jihad is central to all Muslims, it does not have the same status as the Five Pillars and its meaning is confused by Western perceptions of 'fighting for Allah' and the perceived status of dying for Islam.

Q 4 (a) In general, candidates responded well to this question, demonstrating sound knowledge of life cycle rituals. The only weakness was that their importance was often neglected in favour of description of events.

(b) There were some high quality answers to this debate. Many candidates were able to draw upon their own experience and demonstrated relevant knowledge and understanding of the diversity of problems that Muslims face when practising their religion. There was much thoughtful reflection and perceptive evaluative comment about the issues facing religious believers in a secular society and also the idea that facing problems could actually strengthen faith and belief – throughout history Muslims have struggled to fit the principles of Islam into different times and places.

Section B: An Introduction to Judaism

- Q.1** (a) This proved to be a difficult and demanding question for most candidates, yet it is a central area of the specification. Very few answers were directed towards the question with the majority being a summary of the content of the Torah. The following areas were considered to be creditworthy:-

Nature – teaching; differences between written and oral Torah; setting the religion in context; God’s direction for His people; the covenants and obligations laid on the Jews; legislation; Moses as teacher of the Torah.

Authority – different attitudes of Orthodox and Reform Jews; revealed by God; read in the synagogue; centrality during festivals and rites of passage; source of all Jewish teaching; use in home.

- (b) Too many candidates were limited to a basic development of the idea that the Talmud was the written Torah – clarifying and dealing with vague statements (and issues) not in the Torah. The Talmud is studied for the practical application of laws – it is the basic and central document of post biblical Jewish law. However, the continual process of reading the Torah demonstrates its centrality in Jewish life – it is the source of everything Jewish!

- Q 2** (a) This was a popular question and there was a wide variety of response ranging from descriptions of synagogues to comprehensive accounts of their role in the community. The synagogue is much more than a place of worship within Judaism. There are three Hebrew name-designations for synagogue, each of which describes one function of its threefold role:

Beit HaKnesset – House of Gathering.

Beit HaTefilah – House of Prayer.

Beit HaMidrash – House of Study/Learning.

The synagogue is sometimes called shul (a Yiddish word) meaning ‘school’.

There were some excellent answers identifying and explaining these roles and also linking them with specific and relevant practice.

- (b) Responses here were disappointing due to the fact that the question was not read with care – many answers argued for the importance of the synagogue as opposed to the home in Judaism, whereas the thrust of the question was concerned with types of worship and practice! However, there were very good answers that argued for the importance of observing kashrut, festivals, rites of passage as well as conceding that synagogue worship was very important to the Jews.

- Q.3** (a) There were many good answers defining the role and significance of Yom Kippur in Judaism. Candidates who failed to achieve the higher levels did so due to a lack of knowledge of the important role of the synagogue at this festival and the symbolism attached to it. Some spent too much time writing about Rosh Hashanah. Yom Kippur is a High Holy Day or Day of Awe – a name that demonstrates the awesome task and eventual joy that characterises this festival. It is a difficult and painful process of self evaluation, humble repentance, hoped for forgiveness and the ultimate satisfaction of receiving God’s blessing.
- (b) A generally satisfactory response. As well as arguing the case for the centrality of Yom Kippur, candidates were able to make good arguments in favour of Pesach and also the importance of regular Shabbat worship.

- Q.4** (a) Although there were some good answers to this question, it was disappointing that many candidates did not recognise the main gist of the question – i.e. Jewish beliefs. Too many answers merely reflected the practices of Jewish family life with little mention of beliefs. There was scope here for candidates to write freely about the following areas:

Religious life centred round the family.
Shabbat – beliefs with regard to observance.
Rites of passage – beliefs with regard to practice.
Beliefs associated with festivals observed at home.
Observance of mitzvot.
Observance of kashrut.

- (b) Many good responses from candidates highlighting the strength and importance of family life. Alternative viewpoints stressed the centrality of the synagogue, Shabbat observance, following mitzvot, keeping festivals etc.



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