



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE
RELIGIOUS STUDIES – UNIT 1:
CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM**

SUMMER 2019

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

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.

Unit 1	Page
Christianity and Islam	1

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCSE

Summer 2019

UNIT 1: CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

General Comments

The paper was accessible to all candidates and the full range of marks were awarded across the paper. There was less evidence of excellent responses with fewer candidates achieving the very highest band marks. Candidates achieved marks on the paper in a variety of ways; some answers were stronger in the Christian and Philosophy areas and others in the specific section of the paper requiring direct knowledge of Islam. Most candidate responses were bunched in the middle and lower band range of marks. There was evidence of some candidates not engaging with the examination paper and as a result some of the responses of candidates were very brief. Where responses were very brief, candidates disadvantaged themselves in terms of achieving a range of marks. Disappointingly, there was evidence of a significant number of candidates not attempting questions.

Comments on individual questions/sections

PART A – Core Beliefs, Teachings and Practices - Christianity

- Q.1**
- (a)** Most candidates were able to define the key concept by unpacking the three persons of the Trinity.
 - (b)** Some candidates simply wrote everything they knew on the topic of Jesus without careful reference to the Christian beliefs about Jesus as the Messiah. There were some excellent responses which were detailed and comprehensive. Some candidates did not appear to understand the title 'Messiah'.
 - (c)** It was pleasing to see the higher band responses which gave detailed accounts of the Creation of the world with explanation. A significant number of candidates gave a potted version of the account from Genesis with no explanation. Candidates should always respond to the specific demands of the question and the more able candidates correctly responded to this question by supporting their answers with references to the Creation of the world and human beings.
 - (d)** The nature of the statement allowed candidates the opportunity to offer an analysis and evaluation based on a very wide range of supporting religious beliefs. The idea of 'loving your neighbour' and doing good generally was a very common theme and the more able candidates supported their analysis and evaluation with references from the Bible, especially the New Testament. There were some sophisticated responses which linked the idea of doing good on earth to a reward in heaven. Some candidates gave very brief generic responses with little analysis and evaluation.

PART A – Core Beliefs, Teachings and Practices – Islam

- Q.2**
- (a)** Many of the candidates used the wording of the definition provided in the WJEC guide of teaching resources. Some candidates confused the terms of halal and haram and mixed up the definitions of these terms.
 - (b)** The question required a description of the key events concerning the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad. Some candidates ignored the specific demand of this question and gave some general comments about the composition of the Qur'an. Responses were often very brief and simplistic and lacked any real detail. On occasion, there were outstanding responses where candidates gave a detailed description of the events of the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad: this not only included a description of the main events of the Night of Power but also referenced the on-going revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad for the duration of twenty-three years.
 - (c)** The best explanations explored a variety of ways in which Muslims might live in submission to the will of Allah. It was a very open question in the sense candidates chose to answer this question with a wide range of responses. The key to achieving higher band marks in this question was to offer an explanation with reasons. Some candidates focused on the significance of the Five Pillars, unpacking with reasons why they help Muslims live a life of submission to Allah. Candidates were not required to explain all Pillars, although some candidates did so. While other candidates placed a more specific focus on the concepts of jihad, referencing the response to the everyday struggle to live as a Muslim in contemporary society. Either approach was judged creditworthy and each type of response elicited marks for credit-worthy material. Some candidates disadvantaged themselves by writing in a simple, descriptive way without any explanation.
 - (d)** Candidates engaged with this question in a number of ways. This was the opportunity for candidates to write in an extended way and a disappointingly large number of candidates gave very brief responses. Some candidates did not focus on the demands of the particular question and ignored part of the question so there was no mention or reference to 'all Muslims'. No credit was given for reference to atheist, humanist or Christian perspectives offered in response to this question, which had a clear focus only on the religion of Islam.

PART B – Religious Responses to Philosophical Themes

- Q.3**
- (a)** Well answered generally, although some candidates found difficulty in expressing clearly what religious believers mean by the 'soul'. Some candidates simply referred to the soul as 'personality' or 'conscience'.
 - (b)** Some candidates struggled with this question because they did not appear to recognise the term 'global citizenship'. Few candidates were able to write at any length on this question and many chose not to attempt the question.
 - (c)** The higher band responses gave accurate and detailed explanations of both Christian and Muslim attitudes towards abortion, identifying a diversity in views particularly in the Christian traditions.

- (d) The question asked candidates to discuss if ‘euthanasia is always wrong’ but most candidates limited their responses to a discussion of the “for” and “against” euthanasia. Many candidates referred to religious beliefs regarding the sanctity of life although few used any sources of authority to support such references. There was often a limited understanding of humanism and a confused understanding of atheism. Candidates were only required to refer to one non-religious tradition in their responses and when doing so they were expected to deploy an understanding of the non-religious tradition. Many references were made to atheists and humanists believing in euthanasia as they don’t believe in a creator God and so life doesn’t matter.
- Q.4**
- (a) Many candidates gave a detailed definition of the term, including the example of the Quakers as pacifists.
- (b) Candidates used a range of examples to answer this question and almost all used an example from the Christian religion. The most common examples used were Jesus, the parable of the Prodigal Son and Gee Walker.
- (c) Although most candidates showed an understanding of what was meant by the ‘death penalty’ there were many disappointing generic responses which did not reflect the integrity of two different religions or religious traditions. There were few references to specific teachings or sources of authority. Some candidates produced an evaluative type answer stating arguments for and against the Death Penalty but containing little specific explanation concerning the beliefs of Christianity or Islam.
- (d) Most responses gave some justifications regarding the virtues of reform in relation to other forms of punishment such as retribution. Some responses included reference to the work of prison chaplains. It was noticeable that, for a significant minority of candidates, they did not perceive reform as an aim of punishment. Some candidates wrote an entirely secular response with no reference to any religious teachings or use of religious language. The statement refers to the ‘main aim of punishment’ so a comparison with the other aims of punishment was creditworthy. However, some candidates limited their answers to describing the different forms of punishment with no evaluative discussion. Some candidates referred at length to the death penalty and the belief that Muslims accept the death penalty as a form of punishment; there were many instances of candidates referring to laws (or perceived laws) of various Muslim countries being portrayed as Islamic teaching and the attitudes of all Muslims.

Summary of key points

- To enhance the standard of work, candidates should use a range of key and specialist terms throughout answers to demonstrate knowledge of the specification and the religion of Islam.
- Candidates should respond to the specific demands of the question; in (b) questions candidates are required to give only a description whereas in (c) questions candidates are required to give an explanation. In (c) responses where candidates write descriptively without any explanation candidates will not be able to access the higher band marks; often an added ‘because’ with further information will change a response which is highly descriptive in to an explanation.

- Reference to sources of authority, which may include relevant quotations from the Qur'an, should be made when appropriate.
- In 2(d) questions candidates must engage with an evaluative discussion of the statement to access the higher band marks. It is important candidates focus only the religion of Islam in responses.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk