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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

**Pearson Edexcel Level 3 GCE**  
**Religious Studies**

Advanced

PAPER 4: Study of Religion

Option 4C: Hinduism

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## **Introduction**

This paper enabled candidates to respond to their in-depth study of Hinduism. They were able to explain the beliefs, values and teachings, sources of wisdom and authority, and the practices that shape and express religious identity within Hinduism. The responses showed that candidates were able to write extremely well, they had clearly shown improvement in the structure of their arguments since AS Level. There was good concise knowledge and understanding (AO1) of Hinduism, demonstrating the key ideas from the specification. Most candidates were able to assess and analyse (AO2) the concepts that were examined in this paper, some candidates showed an outstanding level of scholarship. Most candidates managed their time well and answered all questions in detail. Where candidates did not perform so well, their responses were less detailed and the AO2 questions contained more AO1 information than AO2.

### **Q1 Explore key beliefs and practices associated with hatha yoga. (8)**

The majority of responses to this question scored well. The answers indicated that candidates had a thorough knowledge and understanding of hatha. Many candidates realised they had to focus on the concept of beliefs and practices, rather than the significance of it to Hindus. Generally began with a description of the practice of hatha yoga, linked to specialist terminology of force and purification and then led onto the beliefs associated with it. The most effective responses displayed a wide range of knowledge and understanding, especially those that referred to the Hatha Yoga Pradipika or comparison to other forms of yoga. Weaker responses tended to describe Yoga in general and gave a narrow range of knowledge and understanding rather than delivering the breadth or depth of knowledge and understanding required by the question.

### **Q2 Assess the importance of Sri Ramakrishna for the development of modern Hinduism (12)**

Most candidates were able to access this question and recognised the importance of Sri Ramakrishna for the development of modern Hinduism. Some candidates answered with reference to Sri Ramakrishna as an integral part in the development of Hinduism as he made the religion more accessible to the populous by making links to other religion, in addition he focused on the spiritual element of the religion being a mystic himself. Better candidates made the link to Swami Vivekanda and that his ideas continued after his death and that this furthered the development of Hinduism. Some using this information as a contrast to the impact that Sr Ramakrishna had himself. Most candidates presented an item of knowledge and understanding (AO1) before analysing it (AO2) and continued to do so throughout the response. Some candidates began with a paragraph of content and description, illustrating AO1 and then used the rest of the response to assess and provide counter arguments. Both approaches are legitimate, but the best answers were those that integrated their AO2 material throughout their AO1 right from the start of their essay, thus achieving the focus on AO2 required. Weaker candidates clearly lacked knowledge and understanding about Sri Ramakrishna and focused on his teaching about the divine self and little else.

### **Q3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about ahimsa. (10)**

Candidates responded well to this question; they were clearly knowledgeable about ahimsa as a concept within Hinduism and most candidates used the content to the passage to support their answer. There were secure and detailed responses that considered the importance of the 'welfare of all' and the 'good of every living creature', and many linked the information to the teachings of Gandhi.

Weak responses either ignored the passage completely and wrote that they knew about ahimsa or gave limited information, mostly copying chunks.

### **Q3 (b) Analyse the significance of dharma (duty), karma (deeds) and ahimsa (nonviolence) in the context of ethics. (20)**

There were some strong responses to this question. Candidates frequently began with an explanation of what ethics was and then what each of dharma, karma and ahimsa were this means that there was a lot of AO1 information. The best responses showed significant understanding of how the three concepts interact and most highlighting the overriding importance of dharma as it encompasses the other two showing good evaluative and appraisal skills.

Candidates with weaker knowledge and understanding usually ran out of information so their answer was very brief showing a narrow range of knowledge and unable to achieve more than Level 1.

### **Q4 Evaluate the significance of differences between the shruti and smriti texts in relation to their authority and use. (30)**

This question was a wonderful discriminator of candidate's religious studies skills. Candidates were able to show their depth of understanding of the two types of texts giving examples and providing some assessment of the value of each type of text. Candidates were able to discuss the authority of each text and then the value of the texts to Hindus today. Candidates accurately used specialist language and terminology terms such as shruti, smriti, tradition, remembered, revealed, authoritative were all used accurately. The strongest responses considered the strengths and weaknesses of shruti and smriti texts and made judgements referring to the question which asked about authority and use.

Weaker responses simply described shruti and smriti texts with an overemphasis on knowledge and examples and little use of AO2 skills.

### **Summary**

Based on the performance on this paper students should:

- Apply material specifically to the question asked.
- Write concisely and use evidence to support arguments
- Learn and use specialist language and terminology
- Ensure that answers requiring AO2 limit the amount of AO1 material given.
- Remember that contrasting arguments to an idea is an effective way to show AO2 skills
- Be familiar with the requirements of the specification
- Practice answering exam questions in the time given

