



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies 1061

RSS09 World Religions 1

***Buddhism OR Hinduism OR
Sikhism***

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - January series

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RSS09 World Religions 1 Buddhism OR Hinduism OR Sikhism

General comments

Questions 1 and 2 were the most popular on the whole paper. Just four candidates attempted Question 3.

Section A *Buddhism*

Question 1 (Topic 1 *Samsara and the three marks of existence*)

Part (a)

Candidates, in the main, had a good understanding of each of the concepts of anicca and anatta. Many included reference to key ideas, with the most able candidates offering appropriate use of examples and evidence.

Part (b)

Weaker responses were generalised in their analysis. In contrast, the most able candidates recognised that, by accepting anicca and anatta, Buddhists are able to develop wisdom more readily and to be less centred on the idea of 'self'.

Question 2 (Topic 2 *The Four Noble Truths*)

Part (a)

This was the second most popular question on the paper. Examples of types of dukkha were abundant, but less developed responses on the Second Noble Truth characterised many candidates' answers. Less able candidates wrote very little about the actual causes of suffering according to Buddhist belief.

Part (b)

Many candidates appeared to find the evaluation statement challenging and neglected to address the issue with examples of how the Eightfold Path can offer a way out of dukkha.

Question 3 (Topic 3 *The Eightfold Path*)

Part (a)

Few candidates attempted this question. Those who did identify the two stages as part of sila (morality) were able to expound well on the teaching.

Part (b)

Responses were, characteristically, either very good or very weak. Most answers supported the statement. The better responses identified how each discipline on the Eightfold Path is interlinked, interdependent and should be practised simultaneously.

Question 4 (Topic 4 *The Sangha*)

Part (a)

The nature of the monastic sangha was exemplified well by the more able candidates. Good examples of aspects of monastic discipline were highlighted. Less able candidates gave outlines rather than examining; candidates need to pay greater attention to the command words used in questions.

Part (b)

Some reasonably good and balanced analysis was evident in candidates' responses. Less able candidates saw the way of the monk as escapist rather than possibly superior to the way of the lay Buddhist.

Section B *Hinduism*

No candidates attempted this section of the examination paper.

Section C *Sikhism*

Questions 9 and 12 were by far the most popular in this section of the paper. No candidates attempted Question 11.

Question 9 (Topic 1 *The Gurus*)

Part (a)

Good factual recall characterised the better responses to this question. Some candidates produced much detail and accessed the higher levels of the mark scheme with seeming ease. Less able candidates generally covered Guru Gobind Singh's life rather than his work; it is important that candidates address the question set rather than giving a pre-prepared answer.

Part (b)

This question was answered well by the more able candidates with clear analysis, good balance and exemplification. Weaker responses tended to be a little one-sided suggesting Guru Gobind Singh was totally consumed by military concerns.

Question 10 (Topic 2 *Festivals*)

Part (a)

Level 3 of the mark scheme was accessed by producing a brief summary of the key points.

Part (b)

A limited response was given to this question, though the significance of gurburbs in the life of Sikhs today was explained.

Question 11 (Topic 3 *The Guru Granth Sahib and the Gurdwara*)

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 12 (Topic 4 *Diwan and langar*)

Part (a)

More able candidates identified the main features of worship (diwan) and examined them well. Weaker answers tended to remain descriptive and superficial.

Part (b)

There was some thoughtful and balanced analysis of the relative importance of sewa and worship in response to this question. More able candidates expressed their understanding of the benefits of selfless service and considered whether this was actually a type of worship.