



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies 1061

RSS08 Religion and Contemporary Society

Mark Scheme

2010 examination - January series

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

Level	AS Descriptor AO1	Marks	AS Descriptor AO2	Marks	AS Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic within the time available. Information is accurate and relevant, and good understanding is demonstrated through use of appropriate evidence / examples	28-30	A well-focused, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are clearly explained with supporting evidence and argument. There is some critical analysis. An appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument.	14-15	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility; high level of accuracy in spelling punctuation and grammar.
6	A fairly thorough treatment within the time available; information is mostly accurate and relevant. Understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate evidence / example(s)	24-27	A mostly relevant, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are explained with some supporting evidence and argument. There is some analysis. An evaluation is made which is consistent with some of the reasoning.	12-13	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, with some development, showing reasonable understanding through use of relevant evidence / example(s).	20-23	A partially successful attempt to sustain a reasoned argument. Some attempt at analysis or comment and recognition of more than one point of view. Ideas adequately explained.	10-11	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	A generally satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, showing some understanding and coherence.	15-19	A limited attempt to sustain an argument, which may be one-sided or show little ability to see more than one point of view. Most ideas are explained.	7-9	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some clarity and coherence in organisation; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar adequate to convey meaning.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	10-14	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	5-6	
2	A superficial outline account, with little relevant material and slight signs of partial understanding, or an informed answer that misses the point of the question.	5-9	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	3-4	Little clarity and organisation; little appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar barely adequate to make meaning clear.
1	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	1-4	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-2	
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	0	

RSS08 Religion and Contemporary Society

1 (a) Examine the evidence for the decline of religion in the United Kingdom.

N.B. Candidates are not expected to know detailed statistics. Broad, general patterns are all that is required. For historical reasons, examples are likely to come from Christianity, but relevant material from other religions may also be included.

- Visual evidence from the landscape: former churches, if not demolished, being used for a wide variety of purposes, commercial and recreational, as well as sometimes places of worship for non-Christian religions.
- Many churches which are in use are functioning with a handful of people.
- All evidences from attendance and membership surveys show steady decline, although there are denominational variations.
- Changing patterns of work and recreation, as well as Sunday trading, mean that traditional times of worship no longer available to many people.
- Decline in number of church marriages.
- Decline in number of infant baptisms.
- Dramatic reduction in vocations, especially in Roman Catholic Church, meaning that traditional patterns of worship can no longer be sustained.
- Candidates may also talk about decline in the status of religion in society.

This is an AO1 question. Discussion of evidence to the contrary is not relevant here.

(30 marks) AO1

1 (b) 'Just because fewer people go to church does not mean that people are less religious.'

Assess this claim.

This affords candidates the opportunity to explore the range of indices of religion, including identification, membership, participation and belief. These factors may be used in a variety of ways to support either side of the argument.

Agree

- May cite a range of factors – 71% still labelling themselves as Christian at 2001 census.
- Religion can be found in other ways than traditional institutional forms.
- 'New expressions' activities may not be classed as church-going.
- Church-going may be seen as irrelevant to personal religion.
- Rise of other forms of spirituality.
- Majority of population still profess a belief in God.

Disagree

- Participation is essential to any human activity, therefore if people don't go to church it is a sign that they are less religious.
- Attendance as an essential aspect of commitment.
- Communal aspects of religion demands participation.
- Religion in all its aspects is in decline, and attendance is a symptom of this.

(15 marks) AO2

2 (a) Examine the functions of the variety of buildings, other than places of worship, which are evidence of the presence of religion in contemporary society.

A wide variety of responses is possible, and it is important that candidates are able to show understanding of functions. Likely examples are:

- Bookshops – meeting educational needs of faith communities, providing literature to help the knowledge and practice of religion.
- Clothes shops, e.g. for Muslims, enabling people to observe appropriate dress requirements.
- Food shops, especially halal and kosher, in order to meet the needs of Muslims and Jews to enable them to meet dietary laws.
- Restaurants which follow these dietary practices; also cafes promoting particular values, e.g. ecological concerns, run by, e.g. Christians and Buddhists.
- Shops which facilitate other aspects of the practice of religion, e.g. those which specialise in travel to religious sites, e.g. to Israel, Amritsar or for Hajj.
- Charity shops – enabling the religious groups to fulfil their charitable work both within the local and the wider community.
- Community centres – meeting wide range of needs including language needs childcare, etc. drop in centres of various kinds.
- Youth centres.
- Homes for the elderly.
- Medical facilities, especially hospices, etc.
- Charity centres.
- Refuges, e.g. for vulnerable families and for those facing other forms of oppression.
- Retreat centres – of various faiths.
- Monasteries and convents.
- Peace / reconciliation centres; promoting dialogue, interfaith activity.
- Shrines.
- Schools and colleges – faith schools may be included, though they should not be the main focus of this answer.

Although it is certainly not expected that answers will reflect this range, some range is expected for marks of Level 5 and above.

(30 marks)

AO1

2 (b) Assess the claim that buildings of this sort are just as important as places of worship.

Agree

- They are part of the 'everydayness' of religion, helping people to live their lives according to the principles of their faith.
- In many religions, the social outreach, and compassionate work, is just as important as the worship.
- They provide an important expression of community, and community is an essential part of religion.
- Part of the 'works' of the religion.

Disagree

- In many religions, worship of the deity is the most important thing, so the places of worship must be more important.
- Places of worship come within the category of 'sacred space' and thus have a special significance beyond the functionality of a place for people to meet.
- Sacred acts, such as sacraments, may occur in place of worship, and this sets them apart as special and more important.
- Places of worship may have historical and/or symbolic significance.

Answers at Levels 6-7 may additionally draw out points such as the following, although it would be possible to access high levels without these.

- Distinction between religions, or groups within religions, in their approach to places of worship.
- Fact that some buildings are very multipurpose, and that many of the activities listed under part (a) may go on in what is regarded by some as the 'sacred space'. Some ideas relating to the theology of the religion, e.g. 'faith and works' debate within Christianity, or understandings of sewa within Sikhism.

(15 marks)

AO2

3 (a) Examine the relationship between religious identity and cultural identity.

Need some **definition of identity** – essential to individual and group meaning systems.

Religious

- Religious 'labels' people put upon themselves – ways in which they answer the question 'who am I?'
- People with whom they naturally associate – and those from whom they may wish to separate themselves.
- Ways in which they express identity – through dress or lifestyle, e.g. Panj Kakke.
- Sometimes religious symbols and practices acquire more importance when in a different culture in order to maintain identity.
- Religious values affecting, e.g. careers or career aspirations.
- Issues of marriage and family life.
- Ways in which they wish children to be brought up.

Cultural

- Cultural labels people put upon themselves.
- People with whom they naturally associate.
- Ways in which express identity – through dress or lifestyle.
- Language issues.
- Issues of marriage and family life.

Relationship

- Essentially complex – practices which may be seen as religious are often part of the wider culture.
- People may share more with others from the same culture than they recognise because of religious differences.
- Many aspects of Jewish identity (e.g. Hasidic) in fact reflect cultural practices of Eastern Europe.
- Outsiders may often not recognise the wide variety of cultural differences between groups of the same religion.
- Often tensions between those of same faith but different culture.
- Or same culture and different faith.

Maximum Level 5 if answers do not deal with relationship.

(30 marks)

AO1

- 3 (b) **'If people maintain distinctive religious or cultural identities today, then society will become increasingly divided.'**

Assess this claim.

Agree

- Social cohesion and good community relations essential.
- There are ways in which it is divisive.
- Especially if people accentuate differences.
- In a way that creates barriers for others.
- Difficulties for people themselves, in trying to live with two identities and moving between cultures and groups.

Disagree

- Everyone needs identity, and plenty of examples of this in other spheres of life.
- If people are religious, their religious identity is at the heart of what they are, and the values by which they live their lives.
- Diversity is stimulating and challenging – the 'dignity of difference'

Higher level answers are likely to be able to talk about issues of dual identity – the British Muslim, the Scots Jew, etc. and the ways in which many seek an identity which transcends traditional groups.

(15 marks) AO2

- 4 (a) **Describe the main characteristics of New Religious Movements.**

- Often based on millenarianism.
- Expect some definition of this.
- Idea of the elect.
- Limited salvation.
- In many a strong apocalyptic element.
- Sometimes arise as a response to crisis.
- Or as a reaction to aspects of religion.
- Or the values of the wider society.
- Many movements American in origin.
- Very strict teachings – accusations of 'brainwashing' made against some.
- Often fundamentalist.
- Strict codes of behaviour expected of members, with expulsion for those who break the codes.
- Some strongly world rejecting.
- Many display characteristics of a cult.

(30 marks) AO1

- 4 (b) **'New Religious Movements have attracted much attention but are of little real significance today.'**

Assess this claim.

Agree

- Many of them by nature are short lived.
- Some have had a very negative reception in wider society and by religious groups.
- Often treated with suspicion.
- Total membership small.
- Less popular in 2000s than in 1980s.
- Do not impinge on the lives of many people.
- Little impact on the wider religious landscape.

Disagree

- For those who have come into contact with them, very significant impact.
- There have always been 'fringe' groups and these help religious groups to focus on what is 'mainstream'.
- Some of the more established New Religious Movements impact on many people through their proselytising activities.
- Although each group tends to be small, increasing number of diverse groups.
- Can argue that they are an established part of the wider religious landscape.

(15 marks)

AO2