



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2011**

**Religious Studies**

**RSS08**

**Religion and Contemporary Society**

**AS Unit H**

**Final**

***Mark Scheme***

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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**

### **Question 1**

**01 Examine some of the ways in which denominational structures within Christianity changed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.**

This question does not expect detailed knowledge of the Church History of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Broad patterns are all that is expected, and a wide variety of examples may be used. The most likely are:-

#### **Ecumenism**

The coming together of the Churches. May refer to 'institutional mergers', the most likely example being the formation of the United Reformed Church in 1974.

A few may even refer to Methodist Union in the 1930s

May refer to LEPs, or to other informal groupings

May refer to changes in RC attitudes to other Churches since Vatican II

#### **Charismatic movement**

New Charismatic churches which transcend traditional denominational barriers.

Charismatic features which appear across different denominations. Increase in Charismatic/Pentecostal churches whilst more traditional denominations are declining.

#### **Fresh Expressions**

Initiative of the Methodist Church and the Church of England to encourage new ways of 'being Church'. Existing within and beyond denominational structures.

#### **Rise of Black led Churches**

Some within mainstream denominations, yet presenting many new denominational forms, some within the Holiness tradition (e.g. NTCG) others reflecting less 'mainstream elements'.

Reference may be made to examples from outside the UK, as long as they are made relevant.

*This question may be approached in depth or breadth, but some range expected for Level 6-7*

**(30 marks)**

**AO1**

- 02** 'In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, traditional denominations have little meaning for most Christians.'  
**Assess this claim.**

This is likely to be approached either in terms of belonging to specific denominational groups losing significance, or of evaluating 'traditional' denominations as opposed to newer structures. Both approaches are valid.

**Agree**

Maybe general sociological view that people are less concerned with traditional 'labels' than once they were.

Ecumenism is much more important.

In a situation of decline, Churches have to stick together and face the common threat of secularism.

In a more pluralistic society, where there are many faiths, Christian denominations are less important.

The theological issues which led to differences have lost their significance.

Older denominations seem less attractive than informal, often more charismatic groupings.

**Disagree**

Denominational 'labels' are still very important to people.

People need to know what they belong to.

There are still major social and theological differences between churches as well as liturgical and aesthetic.

Traditional denominations still very important to many people.

**(15 marks) AO2**

**Question 2**

- 03** **Examine the various forms of places of worship found in the United Kingdom today.**

This is a wide ranging question which can be approached in various ways. At this level, something more than simple description is required.

Answers may come from within one tradition e.g. Christianity, and consider the variety to be found. This may reflect denominational and liturgical differences, or may be based on traditional v. modern, 'sacred space' v multi-purpose buildings etc.

There may be examples of 'places of worship' which do not fit traditional definitions, especially with new forms of Church life and worship.

From within Islam, for example, candidates may consider purpose built mosques, as opposed to those which utilise former warehouses, schools, churches etc.

Candidates may consider some of the significant recent buildings, such as the Swaminarayan Temple in Neasden, or Havelock Road Gurdwara, Southall

Answers which do not focus on 'variety' in some way cannot gain above Level 4.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**04 'An essential aspect of a place of worship is that it is "set apart" and different from other buildings around it.'**

**How far do you agree?**

Responses are likely to vary according to traditions chosen

**Agree**

Consider traditional style of many places of worship; emphasising their 'set apartness' even in the time in which they were built.

Behaviour of those who enter, shoe removing, silence, indicating this idea.

Idea of sacred space within the building, so there are places where the ordinary worshippers will not go.

**Disagree**

There should be no separation between the religious and the secular.

Many examples of churches that are very multipurpose with coffee bars, bookshops, Fairtrade shops etc.

Churches used for all sorts of concerts and artistic events.

Many mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras, and mandirs perform important community functions and are part of everyday life.

Some may consider changing attitudes, and discuss the idea that what was true in former generations is not true today.

**(15 marks) AO2**

**Question 3**

**05 Examine the ways in which one or more religion(s) attempt to maintain a sense of community.**

The focus here is likely to be on maintaining a sense of community within the religion, however, credit should be given to answers which try to show how religions contribute to a sense of community within the wider society.

Expect some definition of community, either explicitly or implicitly

Issues of culture and religion

Issues of dress may be considered, especially where they are not simply about conforming to rules of modesty etc

Dietary laws and customs

Maintenance of traditions

Role of festivals

Communal activities

Language teaching

Faith schools may be mentioned, although they should not be the main focus of such an answer.

Answers of Level 4 and above need to have a clear focus on community.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**06** 'It is extremely hard to maintain a sense of community when a religion is in a minority within the wider society.'

**Assess this claim.**

**Agree**

Difficult; the prevailing culture may be in conflict with those of the religion.

There may be prejudice or ridicule.

Strong temptation to assimilate.

Many pressures on individuals; work and school may create additional pressures.

**Disagree**

Being in a minority can actually help people to focus on their community rather than taking it for granted.

If the values of the faith are important to people, then it is not difficult.

Some may argue that the difficulties are greater for certain groups of people than for others.

The answer needs to focus on the idea of maintaining community. The question is not about practising faith.

This may also be approached from the angle of 'community cohesion' and the presence of majority / minority groups.

**(15 marks) AO2**

**Question 4**

**07** **Examine some sociological reasons which have been suggested for the rise of New Religious Movements.**

**Reasons for their rise**

Crisis/upheavals in wider society

Times of change and uncertainty

Dissatisfaction with accepted norms of society

Lack of definition of these norms and values,

Dissatisfaction with the traditional religious life of the time

relative deprivation theory – people on the margins of society in some way or another, look for some development of this

economic crises

NRM may offer security and certainty

And an instant 'family'

Role of charismatic leaders

And their influence over potential and actual followers

Answers need to focus on sociological reasons.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**08** 'New Religious Movements have no relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.'

**Assess this claim.**

**Agree**

With decline in interest in religion, NRMs have little place

Phenomenon of 20<sup>th</sup> century, less relevant now

Very marginal groups

Little appeal in consumerist world to 21<sup>st</sup> century

**Disagree**

Obviously of some relevance, because they exist

Basic human needs remain – they provide for social and spiritual needs of a number of people

Provide a system of beliefs and values

**(15 marks)**

**AO2**