



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2012**

Religious Studies

RST3H

(Specification 2060)

**Unit 3H World Religions 2: Christianity
Judaism
Islam**

Report on the Examination

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General comments

As in last year's examination, there were relatively few students for the sections on Christianity and Judaism. Islam remains the most popular option for students entering this paper.

Section A Christianity

Question 1 *Origins and development of Christian vocation and service*

- 01** Responses to this question did not really recognise the vocation of an individual Christian in the wider community in any depth or detail.
- 02** Responses to this question claimed that the picture of the early church is limited but offered little specific teachings or examples to support any points made.

Question 2 *Christology*

- 03** Ministry, death and resurrection were covered in detail by all students, which was pleasing to see.
- 04** Students tended to respond poorly to this question with none suggesting it was impossible to follow the example of someone who is divine as a starting point.

Question 3 *Christian action*

- 05** This proved to be a reasonably accessible question to the students who attempted it. The Great Commission was a good starting point and traditional understandings about seeking conversion and the 'saving of souls' seemed to provide for the bulk of the responses.
- 06** Students tended to respond poorly to this question with often a repetition of material on 05 revisited here and little relevant points being made..

Question 4 *Christian spirituality*

- 07** In attempting this question students did cover both aspects of presence and work of the Holy Spirit, which was pleasing.
- 08** Answers to this question were lacking in detail on either side of the argument.

Section B Judaism

Questions 6 and 7 were the most popular in this section of the paper.

Question 5 *Origins and development of Zionism*

- 09** Students who responded to this question all produced very good thoughtful and accurate responses covering both the origins and the development of Zionism. This enabled the students to score level 5 and above with the promise of land as part of Zionism being a main theme in the discussions of origins and the Jewish migrations to Palestine being the main focus for the development.
- 10** This question was very well answered on the whole with students using a variety of examples to try and offer a balanced response. Students picked up on how difficult it was for some to support the Zionist views when there is such a variety and counteracted with the steady increase in proportion of world Jewry living in Israel.

Question 6 *Holocaust issues and theology*

- 11** This was the most popular question in the Judaism section of the examination paper. Most answers were centred exactly on the demands of the question set and some students scored very highly indeed. From Jewish identity to the nature of God to Salvation history there were some superb responses.
- 12** Answers were characterised by balanced views in response to the evaluation statement and most students offered some excellent detail citing many Jewish theologians to assist their evaluative comment.

Question 7 *Bar/Bat Mitzvah, marriage and divorce*

- 13** There was some excellent detail in answers to this question on both practices and teachings. Students did not have to cover an equal amount on both to access the higher levels, though many did. Students were well prepared and very sure of their ground, scoring well. Inevitably given the nature of this question, there were some descriptive answers, but there were clear aspects of understanding in these too. Most of the responses were of a good quality and were characterised by clarity, focus and direction.
- 14** Students gave generally good, considered responses to the issue of support for women or not. Most responses were typically characterised by a balanced viewpoint and some argued that the claim could be supported for Orthodox but not for Reform, which was an interesting and worthy angle to take.

Question 8 *The Hasidic traditions*

No students responded to this question.

Section C Islam

This was, by far, the most popular section of the paper, with Questions 10 and 12 being the most popular questions.

Question 9 *The Shari'a and the Muslim way of life*

- 17** This was a broad question that students found, in the main, accessible. The better responses covered the divine nature of the Qur'an and it was pleasing to see some detail developed in most responses, such as secondary sources, the five categories, ijihad and the various law schools. Equally some students explored definitions of the word Shari'a and how it fits in with the broad term of 'Islam'. Some students offered weaker responses to the question set and were in nature a little too simplistic. These typically made a narrow usage of 'law' or maybe just focused on the divine aspect of the Shari'a. There were also very few illustrations of its nature as revealed through examples, and a minority just ignored the focus of nature and dealt with Shari'a in a broad sense.
- 18** The best answers to this evaluative question focused on the term 'absolute authority'. They also questioned what this meant. It was particularly pleasing to read some good discussions on ijihad and many students were able to use examples from modernist and Shi'ite viewpoints. That said, some students offered a more narrow interpretation and some clearly had little awareness of the issues involved such as the differences in the law schools and ijihad. A minority saw the differences but failed to draw out the implications for the authority of the Qur'an. The weaker responses did not really draw out or unpack what 'authority' or 'absolute authority' meant.

Question 10 *Shi'a Islam*

- 19** This was a very popular question and the best answers clearly dealt with several areas of belief and practice. Some students scored close to or indeed maximum marks and had been taught particularly well on this theme. Some very detailed responses scored highly, particularly if they were exemplified. There was some good coverage of the five pillars with Shi'ite differences. Some students did just focus on the Caliphate issues and Ashura and therefore ignored many of the other areas. Imamate was not always dealt with well enough or indeed the full teaching drawn out. There are many ways in which Shi'a is distinctive in terms of beliefs and practices and some students did not draw these out enough to achieve the higher levels of the mark scheme.
- 20** Many answers used the Caliphate to indicate an overlap between the political and religious aspects, which were often written in an authoritative and thoughtful way. The Imamate was clearly recognised by many students as a religious ideal. The best answers brought in the recent history of political conflicts. Some responses made it difficult to decipher what was religious and what was political and they could not assess whether aspects were either or both. Some students discussed a political aspect when it was clearly a religious one.

Question 11 *God and humanity*

- 21** This question was the least popular question on the Islam section of the paper. Students seemed to find it less accessible than the others but those that did respond had a good level of knowledge on a reasonably difficult subject at A2 level. Some mentioned different views within Islam, for example, the Asharite and other school of thought and they also clearly identified the issues and the links to ideas about God and judgement therein. Others were a little too simplistic in their thoughts and not really understanding the issues. There seemed to be little or no awareness of the conflict between God causing all and free will. Some students appeared to be very dogmatic in their approach and just described the immanence and transcendence.
- 22** There was a good discussion apparent in the better responses between the conflict of ideology connected with all knowledge and free will itself. Some students made a good use of the schools to defend a 'consistency' and the importance of accountability through a link to judgement was used to particularly good effect by some students. Others showed a lack of real awareness of a conflict in ideology and were simply drawn into a description of judgement day and accountability. Some offered rather more simplistic responses on the nature of free will and duty and seemed oblivious to the detrimental implications of an almighty deity.

Question 12 *Women and family life*

- 23** This was a very popular question and there were many good answers with a strong focus on the regulations rather than just a simplistic description. The best answers obviously covered both marriage and divorce in Islam but did not need to have equal treatment in terms of detail to access the higher levels of the mark scheme. Many good answers were able to describe the reasoning behind the regulations on both marriage and divorce and even the weaker answers were able to describe many of the divorce regulations in particular. Some students did miss out on the marriage regulations and instead delivered responses which only focused on the roles of men and women within the marriage set up. Some of the weaker responses lacked the detail needed to access the higher levels of the mark scheme.
- 24** There was a good use made of the traditionalist and the modernist examples to argue a case in response to this question. Some students offered a particularly good discussion of

aspects of the Qur'an that are ambiguous and presented a good, balanced argument. Many responses differentiated between the role and the status of males and females in Islam. Some of the weaker responses denied any inequality at all but they could not justify their point of view. Some responses were very brief and did not have enough exemplification to access the higher AO2 levels of the mark scheme.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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