



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Religious Studies (4056/4057)
Full or Short Course
Specification B

Unit 1 Religion and Citizenship (40551)

Report on the Examination
2010 examination - June series

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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Unit 1 Religion and Citizenship

General Comments

In this first year of the examination the full range of ability was evident and the paper was accessible to most candidates with weaker candidates being able to gain a reasonable number of marks.

The emphasis on evaluation allowed candidates to show that they had considered a range of religious questions and could support their views with reasoned argument. The three-mark questions on the whole were answered well, however the six-mark questions were more challenging. Many candidates were able to argue on two sides of a question but frequently omitted religious teachings or views in their answers thus limiting the amount of marks available to them. Other candidates who were successful in including relevant religious perspectives often did not sufficiently develop their responses to gain the full six marks. The Level Descriptors for five and six marks require candidates to show 'informed insights'; this implies a reference to religion should be more than a general statement.

The freedom to approach topics from the perspective of one or more religions led to some candidates including the views of several religions in their responses. This is to be welcomed. However, centres should guard against the use of too many religions in one topic as there was evidence of candidates confusing the beliefs and practices of various religions.

Question 1 *Religion and Relationships*

- 01 The vast majority of candidates were able to give clear purposes of marriage and in some cases wrote far more than was needed for the two marks that were available.
- 02 There was evidence of good preparation by some candidates who were able to give clear religious attitudes to the issue of sex before marriage. Other candidates limited their responses to 'religions are against it.' In some cases sweeping generalisations were apparent with the Church of England frequently being cited as having a relaxed attitude or allowing it. The use of 'some Christians' or 'many Roman Catholics' etc does allow candidates to show variation in belief without grouping all followers of a religion together.
- 03 This question elicited many thoughtful responses and was answered well.
- 04 The question sought attitudes to marrying someone of a different race. Many candidates apparently misread this and answered from the perspective of marrying someone of a different religion and consequently received no credit. Candidates who dealt with race on the whole were aware that religions have many nationalities within them and consequently for most believers a different race is not a problem if people are united in the same faith.
- 05 There were some well argued responses showing an awareness of the demands of religious teaching linked to the difficulties of remaining married in situations that were deteriorating.

Question 2 *Religion, Sport and Leisure*

- 06 Most candidates scored well in answer to this question.

- 07 Responses varied in quality with the best answers clearly outlining religious attitudes to the use of leisure time and in some cases recognising there are clear views on the misuse of leisure.
- 08 The question prompted some thoughtful and well-argued responses on whether worshipping God was the best way to relax.
- 09 This was in many cases answered very well with candidates making clear comparisons between religion and sport. Where candidates did not do well on this question many of them seemed to treat it as an evaluation and gave their opinion on whether sport had become a religion or not.
- 10 This evaluation question drew some excellent responses from candidates arguing for and against a life-time ban. However, many candidates did not reach the highest levels on this question due to the lack of religious teachings or views included in their responses.

Question 3 *Religion and Work*

- 11 Most candidates were able to give two reasons for unemployment.
- 12 Candidates needed to describe the work of any religious voluntary organisation. This was often done very simplistically and vaguely. For candidates to succeed in this question a clear outline of work done by an organisation was needed. The organisation could be any religious organisation that had volunteers in it such as Muslim Aid or Salvation Army or a local church's work within its community.
- 13 This question produced a good range of responses with candidates arguing for more money to be paid whilst others argued believers were not charities and had to make money for their company to survive.
- 14 This question was not answered well with many candidates struggling to give any religious reasoning why believers should pay taxes. A popular response was that believers should pay tax as they were no different from anybody else. Where candidates were successful they explained that taxes were used to provide healthcare and education and so were to help society and often backed this up with relevant religious teaching.
- 15 This produced a range of responses; some candidates assumed religious believers were new in the country and were there to take people's jobs and others argued that as they were religious they did not need money as their religion would look after them. A few candidates did pick up that religious believers should not earn money in certain ways such as gambling and prostitution and provided coherent arguments for this whilst acknowledging that in extreme situations, earning money to feed a family might lead people to do jobs they should not do.

Question 4 *Religion and the Multicultural Society*

- 16 Candidates gave good responses overall with a small minority resorting to racist comment.

- 17 Many candidates were able to give general attitudes to multiculturalism but few gave specific religious perspectives which meant many candidates did not receive all the marks available.
- 18 This question produced some well argued responses based around the sheer number of holidays that there would be if all festivals were recognised in this way and the impact that would have on a person's work or schooling.
- 19 Many candidates were able to give good examples of how a religious celebration could strengthen communities and community relations.
- 20 There was a very mixed response to this question with candidates arguing that religion and politics should never mix or arguing that believers should campaign only on certain topics. There appeared to be very little appreciation that there are religious believers in politics. The impression gained from some responses was that believers should lead sheltered lives focussing on their religion and not be involved in everyday society.

Question 5 Religion and Identity

- 21 Overall this topic, Religion and Identity, was the least popular of the questions on the paper the vast majority of candidates were able to score two marks for providing two sources for moral decisions.
- 22 This question produced some clear accounts of the purpose of life from different religions but many candidates contented themselves with life's purpose being to raise the next generation or took the opportunity to outline their own views.
- 23 This produced thoughtful responses on what was more important with many candidates arguing that religious identity was the more important to a believer usually because it was the first thing they were aware of rather than nationality and also because it impacted directly on their upbringing and would be a part of them forever, rather than just in this life like national identity.
- 24 Candidates answered this question very well with clear explanations of ways in which believers might show their commitment to their religion.
- 25 Thoughtful responses were provided here in considering whether or not humans are special. Candidates considered religious ideas of human creation and the relationship with God in addition to whether humans could be special if they were the result of evolution and were destroying the planet.

Question 6 Religion and Human Rights

- 26 Most candidates gained some credit for answers to this question although there were fewer with full marks than in the other two mark questions. Many candidates made use of an example to provide clarification of their explanation and this was undoubtedly beneficial to them.
- 27 This question produced a wide range of responses and it was apparent from some that they had little idea what a human rights issue was. Where candidates gained credit, their

answers looked in depth at a particular issue or examined a topic from which they were able to draw out a breadth of human rights issues.

- 28 Many candidates were of the view that religious believers should not resort to violence with examples of Gandhi and Martin Luther King being cited to support their view.
- 29 This was not well done and candidates struggled to give clear religious attitudes to keeping the law. Some candidates treated the question as another evaluation and responded accordingly.
- 30 There were some good answers here, arguing how religions see humans as special and that they should be treated with dignity so there would be no problems. Others argued about the potential danger of religion replacing the UNDHR and how religious views did not always support minority groups, with examples such as homosexual equality and abortion being cited.