



General Certificate of Secondary Education

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

Unit 3 Religion and Morality (40553)

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX

Unit 3 Religion and Morality

General Comments

Standards achieved by the candidates who took this examination were encouraging, considering the fact that it is the first year of the specification and there were some different styles of questions and mark allocations from the previous specification, especially in AO2. Candidates appeared to have been well prepared, with many displaying good knowledge and understanding of the specification content.

Assessment Objective 1

Many candidates displayed good knowledge and understanding, particularly of the moral issues involved. Religious attitudes and responses were less well done with a scarcity of specific beliefs and / or teachings or quotes to support the attitudes written about. These help candidates achieve the higher levels.

Providing religious beliefs and / or teachings is not so crucial in the questions asking why religious believers may agree or disagree with a certain moral issue. However it is pleasing to note that the majority of such answers did focus on a religious response rather than a general secular or social response that may be appropriate to a religious believer. This 'religious' approach produced a sharper focus to answers, especially in questions 2, 7 and 12 and should be encouraged.

The style of AO1 questions varied through the paper, especially in questions 5 and 6. This approach will continue in the future. AO1 will always total 9 marks per question but the way they are allocated (in this case 1+4+4) may change from year to year. It is likely but not guaranteed that each question in future years will have 3 parts focussed on AO1 as this year.

Assessment Objective 2

This is where the main changes to the method of assessment were found. The three mark evaluation questions (qu. 3, 8, 13, 18, 22, 28), asking what a candidate thinks together with an explanation of the opinion were completely new. Many candidates were able to earn the full 3 marks but some seemed unsure about what was expected of them. It would be helpful when preparing candidates for such questions if teachers could make them aware of the level descriptors for such questions. To earn 3 marks, candidates need to express their opinion about the quote and support their opinion with a well developed reason or several simple reasons. Unlike the 6 mark AO2 questions, no alternative response is necessary to balance it, although an alternative did help some to achieve Level 3 because their answers contained more reasoning. Such an approach should not be encouraged however, because most should be able to achieve Level 3 with a reasoned one-sided answer.

Responses to the 6 mark evaluation questions (qu. 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30) were somewhat disappointing with few candidates reaching Levels 5 and 6. This is mainly due to a lack of evaluation, many candidates preferring to treat these questions as AO1 by explaining what believers may think, together with some related ideas of their own without the analysis of these ideas that helps to produce good evaluation. AO2 should build upon AO1 but needs to use evidence and reasoned argument to express and evaluate....

Other weaknesses were answers which were one-sided, lacking religious content or failing to fully address the quote.

Question 1 *Religion Attitudes to Matters of Life*

- 01 Many candidates were unable to correctly identify the meaning of AIH. Some produced some imaginative responses such as 'action in health'; 'aid in hospitals'.
- 02 Most answers gave two reasons why religious believers may agree with fertility treatment but not all were sufficiently developed to earn the additional 'development' mark for each. Pleasingly, most focused on religious reasons but a minority misread the question and wrote reasons why believers may disagree with fertility treatment.
- 03 Many responses to this question displayed a lack of understanding about medical experiments on humans. Some interpreted it as medical procedures such as transplants. 'Playing God' was widely used but its relevance to experimentation on humans was not always made clear.
- 04 Many responses to this question were disappointing. It seemed to be assumed by some candidates that religious attitudes in general oppose transplant surgery. However, if valid reasons were given, this was credited. Sanctity of life was often used to support this view without an acknowledgement that it is also a main reason given in favour of transplant surgery. A surprisingly large number interpreted the question as transfusion rather than transplant and wrote about the Jehovah's Witness view. This was not credited because transfusion is not transplant, but Jehovah's Witness views to transplant where expressed correctly, (i.e. bloodless transplant is acceptable) were given credit. However, many used the ban on blood transfusion to argue that Jehovah's Witnesses oppose all transplant surgery.
- 05 There were some good answers which included some informed discussion of whether religion tells us all we need to know about matters of life. The best answers included examples (those given which are outside the specification e.g. abortion were allowed as examples) but many related their answers to morality in general or discussed whether we need to know what religion tells us rather than whether it tells all we need to know.

Question 2 *Religious Attitudes to the Elderly and Death*

- 06 Most candidates were able to provide an accurate definition of ageism but a significant minority wrote that it is about getting old.
- 07 Answers were generally good with many references to the Islamic view or the fifth commandment. Some answers focused on reasons why the elderly should be looked after without reference to the family.
- 08 There were many good responses to this quote with interpretations leading to either practical support or spiritual support. Both were credited. However, some misread the quote and wrote about why religion should support the elderly (some earning credit where relevant) or whether it is right for people to support the elderly (rarely relevant).
- 09 Despite the question providing a definition of a hospice, many wrote about the elderly rather than the dying. There were however, many good responses to this question.

- 10 Many responses for the quote used the idea about playing God or the sanctity of life without acknowledging that these would also support keeping people alive where they can be saved. There were few references to the quality of life and the value of life which would have been helpful. 'Artificial means' was usually interpreted as being transplant / life support and was rarely broadened out to include medication.

Question 3 *Religious Attitudes to Drug Abuse*

This was the most popular question on the paper judged by the numbers who answered it.

- 11 Almost all candidates gave a correct answer.
- 12 Many answers earned 4 marks. The idea that the body is a temple was widely used although not all who quoted it applied it to drug abuse. The instruction to 'Explain briefly' needs some development of the idea to relate it to the question for more than the minimum mark.
- 13 There were some good responses to this question, with a number of candidates showing an awareness of (legal) over-the-counter drugs and alcohol in their arguments, with higher scoring candidates showing awareness that all drugs could 'damage the temple' if used incorrectly. Candidates who didn't take this into account often put forward arguments that seemed to suggest the only alternative to "medically prescribed" drugs was illegal ones.
- 14 Answers were generally accurate but some were rather vague, e.g. 'religions say alcohol is OK if not drunk to excess' or when drunk at parties. The Islamic view featured widely and was usually used correctly.
- 15 There were some good answers to this question although some were over long and repetitive. Free will was widely used to support the quote but this was rarely analysed by comparing it to addiction which denies free will. Many candidates referred to Rastafarians but incorrectly argued that they permit all illegal drugs rather than just cannabis. The huge majority of responses were written in a mature fashion, dealing with the topic thoughtfully and sensitively.

Question 4 *Religious Attitudes to Crime and Punishment*

- 16 Most equated crime with wrongdoing although some did not refer to it being in breach of state law rather than school rules for example.
- 17 Many answers to this question lacked clarity. When a question asks a candidate to 'Briefly explain two reasons', it is best if each reason is given separately with some development to relate it to the question or provide further relevant information about the reason.
- 18 Many candidates wrote good answers, especially those related to reform. Some answers were brief or undeveloped and could not be awarded the full 3 marks.
- 19 There were some good responses, related to religious teachings. The notion of 'an eye for an eye' was widely used but too many wrote that the death penalty is forbidden in Islam because only Allah takes life. Better Islamic answers included the belief that showing mercy is pleasing to Allah and is considered preferable to the death penalty. A proportion of answers gave a personal opinion which is not what the question requires.

- 20 Many answers were one-sided, usually in favour of punishment rather than help. Many of these did not seem to acknowledge that the question is about young offenders rather than all offenders. Forgiveness was provided as an alternative to both helping and punishing without any mention that it is usually thought to be in addition to them rather than as a replacement.

Question 5 *Religious Attitudes to Rich and Poor in British Society*

- 21 Most answers were correct with 'winning the lottery' being the most popular.
- 22 There were some good answers to this question. Biblical quotes about wealth were much in evidence as were references to Zakah, although these were not usually well related to the quote.
- 23 There were some good answers to this question although a significant minority gave no development at all.
- 24 Many answers were restricted to how / why people should respond to the poor (usually helping them) religious attitudes to the poor will include views religions take about the poor and references to the obligation to help the poor and specific teaching about how particular religious traditions do so might have improved some of the brief or more generalised answers. A minority gave 'unsympathetic' responses which do not reflect religious teaching. The most quoted teaching was 'love your neighbour'.
- 25 There were some thoughtful answers to this question although many were about winning rather than taking part. Some made playing lotteries seem like an excellent investment which could not possibly fail! This led them to include too much about what they would do with the money that they would inevitably win as their justification for playing lotteries.

Question 6 Religious attitudes to world poverty

This is the completely new area of the specification and this year was the least popular question on the paper. There were however some good responses to it.

- 26 A large majority of candidates answered this question correctly. Most of the incorrect answers involved the naming of organizations which are not specifically religious.
- 27 Even if candidates were incorrect in 26, they earned marks in 27 if they described the work accurately. It would be unfair to automatically mark this incorrect just because they were incorrect in 26. Most answers made vague, general points about feeding and clothing the poor without making specific reference to any project the religious organisation has undertaken. As such, they rarely reached the full 4 marks
- 28 There were many good answers to this question. Even those who didn't appear to know a great deal about Fair-trade products were able to make an educated guess to earn at least 1 mark. Those who had learnt about Fair-trade gave good evidence of their learning.
- 29 There were some good answers to this question but as in common with similar questions on the paper, too many candidates did not give two specific reasons with some

information to provide development. Without this, it is impossible to score 4 marks on questions such as this.

- 30 Answers tended to be brief and lacking in a religious perspective. Insufficient thought was shown about the potential implications about cancelling the debt of poor countries and to whom it would be most or least fair.

Overall most candidates seemed to find that the paper allowed them to show what they had learnt. There are however areas where improvements can be made.

- In AO1, where a brief explanation is asked for, extra detail must be given to apply the point made to the topic or to exemplify it further
- To give specific religious teachings where a question asks for an explanation of religious attitudes because this reinforces the attitude as a correct one
- In AO2 to read the quote carefully and ensure the answer addresses the quote
- In 6 mark AO2, ensure that the answer contains analysis and evaluation of the quote or the religious beliefs and teachings that are relevant to the quote so it can be distinguished from AO1
- Some candidates answered all 6 questions on the paper. They should restrict their enthusiasm to answering only 4 complete questions, perhaps spending more time on these 4 questions to ensure they have provided enough development in AO1 and argument and evaluation in AO2.