



General Certificate of Secondary Education

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

Unit 5 Religious Expression in Society
(40555)

Report on the Examination
2010 examination - June series

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Unit 5 Religious Expression in Society

General Comments

Centres had prepared their candidates well for this exam paper.

They coped well with AO1 questions, and were able to perform at all levels within the Level of Response system. Candidates were able to address most if not all questions and part questions. They showed good subject knowledge and understanding, and a good range of examples to write about in all topics. A number of candidates easily confuse questions asking 'why' with those asking 'how' – centres would benefit from tackling the two separately and for each topic.

Candidates also performed adequately with AO2 (evaluative) questions, though better on the three than the six mark questions. It was clear though, that centres need to work on helping candidates to attain the highest levels within AO2, as many candidates were unable to break a ceiling of Level 4. Having said that, whilst this was no barrier to their attainment of highest grades through the rest of the paper, it did provide a very good tool for differentiating between abilities.

The overall quality of candidate responses on this paper across the whole range of questions was both pleasing and impressive. No question stood out as being more difficult for candidates or particularly easy – candidates performed equally well across the whole paper.

The range of examples used within responses was very heartening, as in this first year, teachers felt confident enough to find examples of their own for candidates to use, beyond those met in the current publications. It was also true that candidates within centres used a range of examples, suggesting centres are exploring considerably more than a minimum of one example of any type of art, architecture, etc. This will always be beneficial to candidates, as they will learn to be conversant with the key concepts, rather than tied to particular examples. Of course, centres must enable candidates to write about specific examples in this examination, because on such questions as 03, 07, 13, 23 and 28, candidates cannot gain more than half the available marks unless they focus on a specific example. There will be such questions every year, so it is incumbent upon centres to study them.

Religion and Art, and Religion and Media proved to be the most popular topics, with Religion in Contemporary Society being the least favoured.

Centres should remind candidates to leave one, or preferably two, blank lines between each answer to aid marking.

Question 1 *Religion and Art*

This was a popular question. There was no stronger / weaker part of the question in terms of responses.

- 01 There were generally no problems with this question. The few who failed to gain two marks had either given the same type twice, repeated the example as one of their types, or gave non-art types.
- 02 There were some very good responses to this question, which gained full marks easily. The best responses usually gave an exemplified or explained reason on each side of the

argument. For three mark AO2 questions, it is possible to gain full marks by exploring only one side, though it was more common to see both sides explored, the latter proving more productive in terms of marks. Weak responses merely repeated the statement in different words, rather than challenging or agreeing with it.

- 03 It was very positive to see such a wide range of examples, though these were almost exclusively Christian, and no Eastern religions featured at all. The key to the higher marks was to focus on the religious message of the piece, rather than a description or what impact it had on the viewer (as in 04). The best responses named the piece, explained the key elements of it, and made comments as to a religious interpretation of the image or parts of it. Less able candidates could not offer any example, and left the question out or wrote in general terms.
- 04 Where candidates failed to accrue marks, it was because they focused their response on the merits of worship or symbolism in art or why it is used, rather than **how** it is used. Centres should explicitly teach these different angles as they are commonly confused, and invariably lead to fewer marks being gained.
- 05 There were many good answers focusing around paintings being best or something else being best. Some candidates discussed views for and against the qualities of paintings, i.e. what made them effective / important. Few candidates gained no credit at all, and they were generally candidates who had not attempted an answer.

Question 2 *Religion and Architecture*

This was a popular question. There was no significantly weak part in terms of responses.

- 06 No problems with candidates naming two other types of architecture, with 'buildings and monuments' being the most common.
- 07 There were many good answers which showed that candidates had studied (and learned about) specific places of worship and could freely describe their symbolism. The reasons for candidates not attaining full marks varied. For some it was that there was simply a lack of depth to the given response. For others, the following were issues – a small number wrote about architectural examples rather than focusing on 'place of worship'. Some candidates just chose the symbols of a faith and wrote about those. Some just described the generic symbolic features of religious buildings, i.e. of a church or of a mosque, and did not show they had studied a specific place of worship. A very small number of candidates offered no answer at all to this question.
- 08 This question was answered well. The range of ideas offered was broad, with many candidates giving answers worthy of more marks than were available. Where there were weaknesses in responses, it was often because candidates argued whether or not to have a building, and so did not address the idea of religion being about people rather than buildings.
- 09 This question was answered well and was wide-ranging and had good depth. Most candidates confined their responses to focus on the importance of places of worship, whereas to have extended it to other forms of architecture might have led to more marks. A number of candidates gave lists of reasons, and failed to develop any point in the list. Centres must prepare candidates to respond to 'explain' in the question by doing exactly that, and developing the points they make.

- 10 Most candidates gained at least some marks. Many looked at the idea of emotions and remembrance versus the dead being gone from their physical body. A small number of candidates turned the question into one about whether monuments are a waste of time or money, which did not answer the statement in the question. A very small number pursued the idea of ghosts, mistaking 'spiritual' for 'spirits' – the term 'spirituality' should be referred to constantly over the whole course to try to mitigate against this.

Question 3 *Religion and Literature*

This was a popular question. Candidates seemed to find the challenge equal across the whole of the question.

- 11 There were no problems with this response, other than candidates giving two examples rather than explaining the meaning of the term.
- 12 Few candidates failed to gain any marks on this question. Most argued modern literature against the holy books, and gave a two-sided response.
- 13 The range of texts used in response to this question was good - it covered books, as well as poems, some lyrics, and words to hymns or prayers. Most candidates could write about a work they had studied, and could give at least a simple interpretation of its religious message. Differentiation usually came in the form of the depth of explanation given. The best responses often picked out several religious messages and explained them, rather than just providing a solitary message. One or two described books which had no religious message, so gained no credit. Centres should be aware that song lyrics are entirely valid in this section of the course, as well as in their obvious 'home' of Religion and Music.
- 14 Candidates responses varied considerably on this question, they either performed very well or quite weakly. Weak answers were most often due to missing the key of the question – how literature is used, rather than why it is used.
- 15 This question was addressed well with most candidates writing well on whether or not religious literature is inspired by God. Few candidates explored the roles of devotion and/or revelation, which would have broadened answers. Many candidates referred to holy books, e.g. the Qur'an, as being inspired by God, though few made the point that revelation is different from inspiration and many believers consider their holy book to be the revealed word of God (so not inspired at all). The difference between revelation, inspiration and devotion does need to be studied in the teaching of this course, and from that, their application to each topic.

Question 4 *Religion and Media*

This was a very popular question.

- 16 This was perhaps the weakest of the AO2 three mark questions in terms of responses on the paper. A small but significant number understood 'promote' to mean 'advertisements', and so answered about adverts on TV. Some also showed they did not know the difference between 'satellite TV' and 'TV' and just spoke very clearly in terms of TV programming / channels. This is clearly an area for centres to give focus to.

- 17 There were some absolutely wonderful answers to this question which showed very clearly that candidates do understand the term spirituality. A number of candidates went beyond the required two simple or one explained statement to answer it. A very small number of candidates confused 'spirituality' with 'spiritualism'. Centres should ensure that candidates have a clear understanding of the term and apply it to every aspect studied, e.g. how art is an expression of spirituality, how buildings are designed to reflect spirituality, etc. This will help avoid confusion.
- 18 Candidates did not experience problems with this question. Many issues were flagged up ranging from inappropriate images to promoting inappropriate lifestyles to lies about religion and beyond. Candidates need to develop their point more fully to improve on this question, because they clearly understand the issue.
- 19 The question was **how** to use, not **why** use the internet. Candidates failed to gain some or full marks because of making such a mistake. Many candidates failed to explain the points they made, e.g. they would mention setting up a website for a religion, but not say what it might contain.
- 20 There were many strong answers to this question. Candidates often restricted the scope of their answer however, by not exploring just what the censorship would cover, e.g. should it be censorship of behaviour or of what is said about the religion, or of other religions. Interestingly few, if any, tried to suggest that religions are already involved in censorship either in the UK or abroad (either by being on TV panels, or through the Government/law, or of their own satellite channels, for example). This would have given another angle for argument, and is a line of discussion centres might consider in their delivery of the course. There was some confusion regarding what was meant by 'censor', and some candidates took it to mean controlling content to increase the amount of religion on TV.

Question 5 *Religion and Music*

This was quite a popular question. It was generally well answered.

- 21 The only problem met here was where a candidate was too vague with the type of music they gave, so that it was not obviously religious.
- 22 There were many good responses to this question. Many candidates concluded / discussed that actually music was not a 'necessary' thing, but definitely a good / helpful one for worship.
- 23 There was a fabulous range of examples given, which were included within some truly superb answers. It was clear candidates had enjoyed the topic and had seen the message and spirituality therein. Where candidates failed to accrue the higher levels, it was because they described the contents of the piece of music rather than exploring its religious message as the question required.
- 24 The question was about how music is used, and unfortunately candidates often wrote about why music is used. This was a common problem across the exam paper. For a number of candidates it meant little or no credit was gained for this answer. The good responses wrote about using music to support prayer, to aid meditation, in the singing of hymns in praise of God, etc.

- 25 There was a range of responses to this which showed some candidates using their full comprehension of the topic Religion and Music to answer extremely well. Many candidates gave reasons to agree or disagree with slight development. A small number simply failed to understand the term 'inspire', which made it very difficult for them to gain any marks.

Question 6 *Religion in Contemporary Society*

This was the least favoured question on the paper.

- 26 Most candidates could gain at least one of the two available marks, either through defining religious symbolism or giving an example.
- 27 The vast majority of answers agreed with the statement that non-believers should not wear religious symbols citing either that this would be 'offensive' or that it would show 'disrespect'. Few candidates found it difficult to gain at least two marks in this question.
- 28 This was probably the worst answered question on the exam, with some candidates choosing not even to attempt it. Candidates did not understand the term 'community', and could not give an example. Some candidates described a religion as a community, which, though not in the mark scheme or intended by the specification, was credited. This is clearly an aspect centres should discuss with candidates in greater depth.
- 29 This question was answered well and many candidates gained full marks. The question allowed for corporate or individual worship, but most candidates discussed only why corporate was important. A small number chose to explain the consequences of not worshipping as a motivator to actually worship (fear of heavenly punishment), which was creditworthy.
- 30 Most candidates gained at least some marks from this question. Most answers focused around not forcing religion on others, and being proud of your religious identity, or having a right to express yourself. There was little mention of such arguments as the missionary duty which is met in some religions, and few explored what it actually means to keep faith to yourself. These would have helped develop or broaden many answers.