



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Religious Studies B (4055)**

**Unit 1: Religion and Citizenship                      40551**

***Report on the Examination***

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## Unit 1: Religion and Citizenship

### General Comments

In this second year of the examination the entry numbers have increased substantially and the full range of ability was evident. The paper was accessible to most candidates with weaker candidates being able to gain a reasonable number of marks.

The order of questions on the paper this year varied from topic to topic with some beginning with a two mark question, others a three mark and one a four mark question. This does not appear to have caused difficulty to candidates who appear to have responded well to the variation. Varying the mark allocation like this does allow different parts of the specification to be examined and also provides some logical flow through the questions rather than jumping from one idea to another.

Centres should be aware that whole questions on topics will consist of four or five parts, making up a total of 18 marks, 9 marks for AO1 and 9 for AO2. There will always be two AO2 questions, one a 3 mark question and the other a 6 mark question. Marks for individual questions for AO1 may differ from year to year, but, for each whole question, there will always be two or three questions for AO1, totalling 9 marks. Therefore any combination is possible e.g. 2, 3, 4, or 1, 3, 5, or 3, 3, 3 etc. Whichever combination is chosen will apply to all whole questions on the paper. This enables examiners to examine the AO1 assessment objective in relation to the specification in the most appropriate way, depending on the content being examined from year to year. This is fairer to candidates. It enables technical terms, or more challenging parts of the specification to be examined appropriately and provides candidates with opportunities to write at greater length on issues where there is a greater body of knowledge or explanation available.

Once again 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.

It was noticeable that some centres have encouraged candidates to use a formula in answering six mark questions and whilst this is undoubtedly helpful to candidates when done well, centres need to ensure that it will deliver the top marks that the candidates seek. Where candidates are encouraged to put different points of view and use religion as an integral part of the answer to support the points made then they are able to access the six mark level descriptor requiring, 'informed insights and ability to apply knowledge and understanding of religion effectively'. Some methods seen encourage candidates to state different views and then include one or two sections of religious teaching. Very often this religious teaching is stated as though answering an AO1 question and no attempt is made to integrate this into the main answer or to use it as part of the evaluation. As a result candidates are not able to access the higher levels of response.

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 being used in one topic as there was evidence of candidates confusing the beliefs and practices of various religions.

There was a noticeable increase this year in the number of candidates attempting all six questions and reports came from the team of examiners of some centres where all candidates had attempted all six questions. This should not be done as candidates who attempt all six questions frequently under-perform on the paper due to time constraints, meaning they are unable to deal with the questions in the appropriate depth to gain the top marks. In such cases the candidates were awarded a mark based on the four 'best answered' questions.

### **Question 1: Religion and Relationships**

This was the most popular question on the paper and elicited many good responses from candidates.

In 01 the most common mistake was for candidates to give two reasons rather than developing one reason. In 02 there was evidence of good preparation by candidates who were able to clearly explain the responsibilities couples take on when marrying. In some instances candidates wrote far more than was necessary for the three marks available. 03 drew some very thoughtful responses from candidates with the best answers acknowledging that whilst it should be an individual choice who to marry, parental approval was desirable, regardless of background, as the partner would be joining the family and good relationships in the family were important. Some candidates appeared to interpret the question as being one about arranged marriages and responded accordingly. Such responses gained few, if any marks in many cases, whilst others did bring in the link between arranged marriages and parental approval.

04 elicited some very good responses, demonstrating clear knowledge and understanding of attitudes to sex outside marriage. There was good use of religious teaching from many traditions though on occasion some sweeping generalisations were apparent – for example within Islam adultery is a capital offence only among a minority of Muslims. The Qur'an lays down a punishment of 100 lashes for those caught committing adultery but only if there have been four witnesses to the act. 05 had a mixed response. Some candidates appeared to have a 'pre-packaged' sex before marriage answer which was used at this point. However in using it, candidates rarely got to grips with the issue of the age of consent. Many candidates evaluated the issues of feeling pressurised into sex at an early age and emotional immaturity at 16 compared to 18 along with the risks of pregnancy and STIs and also argued that as the law was set at 16, obviously some people felt that it was appropriate. Some candidates also recognised that many religions have no problem with an age of 16 provided that the couples are married.

### **Question 2: Religion, Sport and Leisure**

This question began with 06 which was worth four marks and candidates responded well to it. There was evidence of clear knowledge of religious attitudes to gambling and many candidates gained three or four marks. Quite a common mistake was in the use of the quotation from 1 Timothy 6:10 which was used as 'Money is the root of all evil' rather than the correct 'The love of money is a root of all kinds of evils'. It is the desire and wanting of more money that is the problem rather than money itself. In 07 most candidates scored maximum marks and in some cases wrote more than was necessary to secure the two marks. 08 prompted some very good responses on the benefits of taking part in sport, built

around the physical, mental and social aspects of sport. 09 similarly drew good responses from some candidates whilst others focussed mainly on the idea of talent in general and did not link it to being 'a gift from God'. Part 10 was the evaluation and presented a challenge to many candidates. There were many general equality answers with religious teaching quoted such as 'everybody is equal' but relatively few candidates got to grips with whether equality was an impossibility. The best answers considered religious teachings but also looked at examples of sport such as rugby and football where men and women's teams exist side by side and also considered tennis and badminton and other sports where men and women do compete together in mixed teams. Good responses also included discussion of whether equality would ever really happen considering the levels of sponsorship, salaries and TV coverage of men's and women's sport.

### **Question 3: Religion and Work**

In 11 many candidates were able to give two examples of voluntary work whilst a minority of candidates gained no marks due to listing voluntary organisations. In 12 there was a mixed response with the best answers giving good reasons for doing voluntary work as well as questioning whether only religious believers should undertake it. Many candidates felt that all people with time should undertake voluntary work. 13 drew many general points from candidates but relatively few were able to give solid religious teachings about attitudes to work. A common misconception in the use of the quote (here and in 15) from 2 Thessalonians 3:10 'if a man will not work, he shall not eat' was that if somebody did not work then they should receive no aid or help and according to some candidates, should be left to starve to death. This is a conclusion that cannot be drawn from the verse. The verse is directed to those who will not work due to idleness rather than being unable to work due to illness or redundancy and unemployment. 14 produced many excellent responses and most candidates were able to provide detailed reasons why unemployment will cause problems. Part 15 provided some interesting and insightful responses that in many cases were linked to relevant religious teaching. Some candidates displayed good knowledge of inappropriate workplaces for religious believers but did not develop the points further by explaining why they were inappropriate and thereby did not gain the marks they could have done.

### **Question 4: Religion and the Multicultural Society**

Part 16 elicited some good responses from candidates on why religious believers should be involved in politics. A small minority misread the question and explained why believers should not be involved using responses appropriate to last year's evaluation question on that theme. 17 produced a mixed response, from candidates who appeared to be unaware that there is a state religion in the UK to those who were fully aware and produced thoughtful and perceptive responses about trying to maintain the historic heritage of a state religion in an increasingly multicultural and secular age. Part 18 drew good, detailed responses showing excellent understanding of the work of faith-based projects. However, many candidates wrote about organisations without any faith background or about pressure groups. Candidates seemed either to know the answer to part 19 and gain full marks or have no idea and gain no marks. A minority gained one mark. The most common mistake was to confuse integration with either immigration, emigration or interrogation. Part 20 produced some very strong answers which showed a good knowledge of the debate on both sides. Many religious arguments were also incorporated. Where candidates did less well they tended to focus on immigration as a whole rather than asylum seekers. Some candidates took the opportunity to outline their own personal opinions in a rather forthright manner. Frequently these instances lacked correct information and were often assertion and opinion without reason to back them up and so consequently gained no credit.

### **Question 5: Religion and Identity**

Overall this was the least popular of the questions on the paper. In part 21 there were some very good answers showing a clear understanding of the nature of the soul and the afterlife.

Where candidates did not address the question, they often wrote about paying attention to conscience and a sense of right and wrong. 22 produced some excellent answers where candidates related the question to the concept of free will and the fact that, if obeying God was the purpose of life, then there would not really be any free will and life would be very boring as we would all be the same. Part 23 seemed to be a question candidates either knew or did not. Relatively few candidates answered this question fully whilst others gained one mark having identified the idea of having a different role or title in different situations. In 24 many candidates gave good explanations of why religions encouraged healthy living. However considerably fewer were able to explain how religious beliefs and practices encourage healthy living, as the question required. 25 elicited thoughtful responses from candidates considering whether sacred writings are relevant for decision making today. Many candidates considered the role of conscience and family and friends as well as other sources in decision making. Weaker responses tended to lack reasoned development and often concluded with assertion rather than reason that a particular source was/ was not more important than sacred writings.

### **Question 6 Religion and Human Rights**

Most candidates scored two marks in 26, many relying on the stimulus for at least one answer. This was not a problem but it did raise an issue in 27 where candidates had to describe the work of a pressure group. Responses to this question were often not secure and candidates tended to write in general terms suggesting a lack of clarity about what a pressure group is. In 28 there were some very interesting responses and many candidates were able to effectively incorporate religious teachings such as 'Love your neighbour'. 29 was often quite poorly answered with candidates making general points without any real reference to religious teachings. Many candidates gave detailed explanations of the work of Ghandi and Martin Luther King and often made the point that religions did not believe in violent protest. Part 30 produced a variety of responses. Some candidates misread the question substituting 'protest' for 'protect' and responded accordingly. Some credit was gained as protesting about Human Rights was in some cases a way of doing more to protect them. Some candidates did not take note of 'more' in the question. There were some very interesting responses in which candidates argued that religions needed to do more to protect the human rights of their own members and raised issues such as the burqa and human rights for women and education for girls in places such as Afghanistan. Others wrote very lucidly about the need for believers to protect the simple human rights of people throughout the world in terms of food, water and shelter.

### **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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