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Examiners' Report

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Chief Examiner's Report 2006

Religious Studies continues to increase its entry at GCSE level whilst maintaining the overall level of performance.

Despite two comments in previous reports, Section 5 in the examination continues to under-perform in all units. Centres are reminded that this section is worth 23 marks and therefore should be given special attention in teaching, in revision and in the examination. Centres are reminded that in both the 100% examination and 80% examination, the Quality of Written Communication is assessed in Section 5 only. Quality 3 is awarded only to candidates who use a formal style of writing typified by the use of sentences and paragraphs and by not using bullet points or slang.

Centres are reminded that in the evaluation questions candidates are expected to put forward two points of view with at least two reasons for each point of view. To reach level 4, they are also expected to show clearly either which point of view they consider to be the stronger, or why they consider both points of view to be equally valid.

Questions on different attitudes have continued to cause problems for some candidates. If a question refers to different attitudes, candidates must refer to at least two attitudes to gain top marks. GCSE Religious Studies, as well as the National Framework for RE at key stage 3, expects candidates to be aware that there are different attitudes within a religion. Candidates should therefore be taught that not all members of a faith will have the same attitudes. The adjectives 'most', 'many' and 'some' are particularly useful here, e.g. 'most Christians are against divorce', 'some Muslims are against divorce', 'many Hindus are pacifists'.

Principal Examiner's Report on Unit H - 5575 (100%), 5576 (80%)

Unit H had another increase in the entry. The year on year growth of Unit H is a strong indication that the contemporary content of the specification remains popular with centres and candidates. The standard of performance was similar to last year.

Section 1

This section was generally well answered, although many candidates had problems with Q1(c) on Christians using the Bible to make moral decisions because often they wandered off to 'conscience' and 'most loving thing to do'. Those who did give reasons in Q2(c) rarely went beyond 'throwing the money changers out of the temple' and 'give to Caesar what is his'. Many candidates gave very good answers to Q1(d) where they explained with good reasons the British multi-faith society and the need to be fair to all religious beliefs. The majority of candidates had little problem with Q1(a) and Q2(a).

Section 2

Candidates generally answered this section well, showing a strong interest in the environment and animal rights. However, some candidates gave confused answers on the Greenhouse Effect, often confusing it with the hole in the Ozone layer. Both questions Q3(b) and Q4(b) were answered very well indicating an interest in caring for the environment and the problems created if people don't. Question Q3(c) was less well answered because candidates gave descriptions on animal testing rather than reasons for having different attitudes to animal rights. Q4(c) threw up the same problem as previous examinations. A significant number of candidates have still not been taught that Greenpeace is not a religious organization. However, many centres have taken notice of previous reports and carried out productive research on religious organisations caring for the environment. The evaluation answers produced some very thoughtful insights into both animal welfare and stewardship.

Section 3

Some candidates found problems with Q5(a) and Q6(b) where they were unsure of the word reconciliation. This resulted in considerable rhetoric with little significance. Q6(c) was answered well, showing an interest in why people are against bullying. Often they went on to explain why bullies do what they do. Question Q5(c) highlighted the same problem as Q4(c) where candidates insist on using Greenpeace as a religious organization. Q5(d) generated long and detailed answers with valid reasons and different viewpoints concerning arguing with their parents. Answers for Q5(b) demonstrated good knowledge of the conditions for a 'just war'.

Section 4

Crime and Punishment was the best answered section on the paper with the exception of Q7(a) and Q8(b). Candidates need to refer to the glossary terms more often during revision. Also, most candidates who answered Q8(b) referred to Islam in their answer and gave descriptions of punishments for various crimes rather than teachings on justice.

Section 5

Question 9 was much more popular than question 10, but those who attempted question 10 gave very good answers showing a good understanding of religious and scientific cosmologies. Question Q9(c) was particularly well answered as candidates had very definite views on genetic engineering and appreciated that other people would not agree with them. Q9(b) was either answered very well or very poorly. Candidates either understood infertility treatments in a religion other than Christianity or had no idea. Q9(a) produced answers at either level 2 or level 3. Most candidates were aware of some attitudes to transplant surgery.

Principal Examiner's Report on Unit I - 5577 (100%), 5578 (80%)

Unit I has maintained its number of candidates this year. Performance by candidates was at a similar standard to that of previous years. Despite comments in previous reports about the misunderstanding in candidates' minds between Church and church, there seemed no evidence this year that there was any improvement in understanding the difference.

Section 1

Q1 was generally well answered although a significant minority of candidates wrote about the Salvation Army for Q1(c). Most candidates were able to achieve level 3 on Q1(b). Some candidates did not understand what the Trinity is in Q1(d). Question 2 also was generally well answered with many candidates achieving level 3 for Q2(b). Some thoughtful answers were given for Q2(d).

Section 2

Question 3 was generally well answered although some weaker candidates wrote about the Roman Catholic Church in Q3(c). There was some thoughtful consideration of the arguments in Q3(d). Question 4 however was not so well answered, chiefly because of the misunderstanding between Church and church. It is important that candidates really understand the difference.

Section 3

This section was also generally well answered. Q5(b) had some good level 3 answers although a sizeable minority obviously didn't understand the term 'non-liturgical'. Q5(c) was mainly very well answered with many candidates reaching level 4. In Q6(b), many candidates were unable to distinguish between believers' baptism and infant baptism. Q6(c) was generally well answered, particularly by those who answered from a specifically Roman Catholic standpoint. Both evaluations produced some thoughtful answers.

Section 4

This section, as in previous years, was not so well answered as the other sections. It would appear that too many candidates do not know the Sermon on the Mount very well, although the two questions on the Ten Commandments, Q7(b) and Q8(c) were generally quite well answered. In Q7(c) there was a lack reference to the teaching of Jesus other than 'love thy neighbour' - which was often not clearly linked to service. Q8(b) was generally poorly answered and Q8(d) often failed to get beyond talking about prejudice.

Section 5

Question 10 generally tended to be answered much better than Q9. Q9(a) often produced level 4 answers but Q9(b) mainly produced purely descriptive answers without explaining the features they wrote about. Q10(a) was generally well answered, often portraying visits candidates had made to religious communities. Q10(b) however, revealed a surprising lack of understanding of the nature of the contemplative life. Q9(c) and Q10(c) again produced some thoughtful answers.

Principal Examiners Report on unit J - 5579 (100%), 5580 (80%)

Unit J has had a much larger entry than in previous years mainly from Catholic Centres and there is obviously some excellent teaching to the specification taking place. New centres would be well advised to ensure that their staff attend Edexcel in service training so that they are aware of the demands of the different types of questions. Candidates found it difficult to answer some of the questions because of the specifically religious terms that were used the glossary definitions used are available to download from the Edexcel web site and candidates should be familiar with them.

Section 1

Q1 (b) Most candidates were able to answer this question and the majority gained maximum marks because of their familiarity with the apostles creed. Q1(c) caused many problems due to candidates not understanding what salvation is this is in the specification and questions will be asked regularly. Q1(d) most candidates were able to attempt this question and good answers were those that referred to the teaching of the Church, poorer answers gave a personal response and did not consider an alternative.

Q2 (a) Most candidates knew their glossary definitions very well or listed the parts of the Trinity for full marks. Q2 (b) Candidates were able to answer the question beliefs about God but this was specifically linked to those about the fatherhood of God, many candidates lost marks when they started describing the attributes of God. Q2 (c) was answered particularly well and candidates achieved high marks for Bible references that were explained and linked to the question it was less well answered by candidates who gave knowledge based answers (often simple a Bible reference - Love thy Neighbour) and were unable to explain why it was important for Christians. In Q2 (d) many candidates ably discussed whether the crucifixion was a waste based on the idea of salvation although some candidates were unable to find an opposite argument.

Section 2

In Q3 and Q4 candidates lost marks because of their confusion between Church and church. It is important that they are taught the difference between the two and are aware that this should make a difference to the way they answer a question. In Q3 (b) candidates produced knowledgeable answers and the question caused no real problems. In Q3(c) some candidates failed to be aware of Church as the body of Christ and described Catholic churches (section 5); some did not know what Catholic meant, this meant that many candidates did not choose to answer this section. However, those that chose to answer it were able to produce good answers and many were aware of the shared faith of all Christian churches. Q3 (d) produces good well-answered answers mostly including opposite views and personal opinions.

In Q4 (b) there were some excellent answers from those candidates who knew the question was about the Church candidates who talked about a church were limited to level 2 Q4(c) some candidates produced very well explained answers with evidence given from biblical and canonical sources. In poorer answers candidates did not know what celibacy meant and waffled about why it is important to have priests Q4 (d) many candidates did not answer about the Church and again talked about churches making the question more difficult for themselves and as such gained lower marks.

Section 3

In Q5(b) a surprising number of candidates included Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday in Holy Week as this is a clear area for study it should be looked at carefully by centres. Many candidates gained full marks for this question, how it is celebrated however a few merely described what Jesus did rather than answering the question and so gained no marks. In Q5(c) good answers were those that were able to give a number of reasons why the Mass is important rather than describe what happens in Mass Q5 (d) was well answered many referred to their own confirmation and used their reasons for receiving the sacrament, which were interesting to read. However it was a pity that many candidates did not give a conclusion in their answer and as such limited their marks to Level 3.

In Q6 (b) candidates who chose this question were able to give clear concise answers and usually gained maximum marks In Q6(c) candidates were able to describe what Lent is but many were unable to explain why it is important centres should remind candidates that c) questions require reasons rather than facts Q6 (d) was answered very knowledgeably on the whole and produced interesting personal opinions about what true Catholics really are.

Section 4

In Q7 (b) this question should have been straightforward. However many candidates ignored either the fact it was about the ten commandments or that it was about showing respect for God and described those that showed respect for each other which resulted in incorrect answers. Q7 (c) produced some excellent answers and many candidates were able to give biblical examples to show why Christians should serve others, there were some answers which were purely knowledge based but these were a tiny minority. Q7 (d) proved very popular with candidates who answered well and with good alternative examples - including RE teachers - that should be followed.

Q8 (b) proved difficult for some candidates who were unable to remember which teaching are in the Sermon on the Mount or described the teaching in the sermon rather than that which was specifically about money. Q8 (c) A well answered question by those who referred to the last seven of the Ten Commandments. Q8 (d) was answered well and produced well though out answers.

Section 5

Q9 (a) was usually answered well, and most candidates were able to describe a number of roles/functions of the church. Some candidates were limited to the Mass and other Sacraments and centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the activities that take place in Church outside of formal celebrations. Q9 (b) was mostly answered well although some candidates merely described the inside of a church and did not explain why the various features were needed. The best answers were given by candidates who understood the symbolism of the various features as well as the use of them. Q9(c) was generally answered well but usually in a one sided way, many candidates did not realise that this was about all denominations praying together and discussed private vs. collective prayer and this they found difficult.

Q10 was not as popular as Q9 although it produced excellent answers from the candidates who had been prepared for it. Q10 (a) many candidates described the Benedictines or the Missionaries of Charity, although some candidates struggled and used unacceptable answers such as the SVP or CAFOD. In Q10 (b) most answers were very good and were able to explain the reasons for choosing a contemplative lifestyle. Q10(c) was usually answered well with references to the bible from more able candidates, poorer answers resulted from candidates giving one sided answers or running out of time.

Candidates are advised to ensure that they take the full 30 minutes given on this section and because marks are awarded for quality of written communication on section five it is a good idea to begin answering the paper with this section.

Principal Examiner's Report on Unit K - 5581 (100%), 5582 (80%)

Once again, the entry for this year represented a very wide spectrum of ability, and examiners were particularly pleased to mark some excellent scripts showing the full range of knowledge, understanding and skills expected at this level. Centres do need to note however, some of the introductory remarks from previous reports which set out some of the weaknesses seen in the majority of scripts, and for which candidates continue to need help and guidance. These are, in particular, the need to show awareness of an alternative viewpoint in (d) questions, and to note that the alternatives will often be from within the Muslim community; and the need to be familiar with reasons why Muslims hold particular views and beliefs in answering questions which ask for an explanation, namely (c) questions in Sections 1 to 4 and (b) questions in Section 5. Candidates who merely give descriptions rather than presenting reasons, will not progress beyond level 1 in these questions.

Section 1

Most of the questions in this section were answered clearly and thoroughly, for example Q1(c) about the importance of Akhirah for Muslims. However, for weaker candidates this was an example of how some merely described what the belief is, rather than giving reasons for its importance within Islam. Where candidates approach a question in a way which differs from that anticipated in the mark scheme, examiners will view the answers sympathetically, and where the answer represents a valid interpretation of the question, it will be marked positively. For example, in Q1(b) about beliefs in the power of Allah, many candidates included a wide variety of characteristics of Allah, such as Tawhid. Where they showed that this could be seen as an aspect of the power of Allah, they were credited accordingly. The (d) questions produced thoughtful and lively discussions, especially Q1(d), where many candidates showed a perceptive awareness of the tension between predestination and freewill.

Section 2

More able candidates found this section straightforward, but others struggled in particular with Q3(b) and Q4(c) where knowledge and understanding of the Shi'ah tradition was often limited and frequently inaccurate. Q3(c) was very well answered by the majority of candidates, but a significant minority treated this as a knowledge question and gave detailed descriptions of what Muslims do to show respect for the Qur'an, rather than why they do so. A variety of approaches were used in response to Q3(d), some focusing on the word 'perfect', others on 'for everyone', in relation to the example of the Prophet, both perfectly acceptable approaches to the issue. Similarly, different but valid approaches were taken to Q4(d).

Section 3

This should have been a straightforward section of the paper for all candidates but, surprisingly, many confused Id-ul-Fitr with Id-ul-Adha (Q5(b)), a number merely described the process of giving zakah, rather than explaining how it contributes to a sense of unity in the ummah (Q5(c)); others described some of the rituals of the hajj without showing how they are linked with the prophets of Allah (Q5(c)). There were however some excellent answers to both Q5(d) and Q6(d), many showing a perceptive understanding of the role and purpose of prayer in Islam, and of the principles of Islamic spirituality, including niyyah, and linking these with the concept of ibadah in relation to all the five pillars.

Section 4

The two descriptive questions, Q7(b) and Q8(b) were generally answered fully and in detail – some of the detail unnecessarily elaborate given that the task in both cases required only an ‘outline’, not a detailed description. Q7(c) and Q8(c) presented more difficulties, with many simply describing the greater jihad without showing how it ‘might affect the way a Muslim lives’, and describing how the shahadah is repeated at birth and death, without relating it to the idea that the whole of life, from start to finish, belongs to Allah. The (d) questions in this section were generally rather less well answered than in others, lacking clear discussion about the application of Shari’ah in a non-Islamic context. There were, nonetheless, a few excellent answers, especially those showing how Shari’ah law can be followed, in spite of the context of a society with apparently secular, capitalist values.

Section 5

The overwhelming majority of candidates answered Q9, and generally did so thoroughly and accurately. There was, however, a distinction between those who simply listed and described the various features of a mosque, and those who gained the higher marks by showing how each feature is linked with prayer, as the question asked. Likewise, there was a difference between those who described the roles of the imam in a Sunni mosque and those who showed how these roles are linked to leadership of the community. Most candidates were able to present alternative views about how far a mosque is essential for worship (c). The few who attempted Q10 were generally not well informed about the Sufi tradition.

Principal Examiner's report on Unit L 5583 (100%), 5584 (80%)

5583

The 100% entries varied considerably in ability but there was evidence that candidates had generally been taught carefully and in accordance with the specification, although some did still not pay enough attention to or spend enough time upon the extended writing in section five. Some responses in section five were very short. In addition some candidates did not always give a personal response in the (d) evaluation sections nor did they give an alternative or contrasting position which reduced the levels they could achieve.

5584

The 80% entries were on the whole excellent, showing clearly that the candidates had been prepared carefully and some had an obvious and stated personal Jewish faith. Sadly there were a small number of candidates who scored no marks at all and for some reason had not written anything. Clearly though, the majority had been taught in line with specification requirements and understood the types of responses required. Some had also been taught rigid answer outlines.

Stronger candidates could respond by giving more than one attitude and could explain why and how various topics are important in Judaism. Weaker candidates struggled with key words and were confused by different festivals and rituals, tending to write rather bland, non specific responses gaining very low levels or none at all.

Section 1

In section one (beliefs and values) candidates were stronger in their response to Q1 than they were to Q2. Q2(c) seemed too complicated for those candidates for weaker candidates. This section was not as well answered the others.

Section 2

In section two (community and tradition) candidates did in Q3(c) and Q4(b) Both evaluative questions provoked an interesting and well informed response. Some of the weaker candidates had problems with terms Talmud and Mishnah.

Section 3

In section three (worship and celebration) stronger candidates did very well, often gaining high levels and writing much more than was necessary. Some weaker candidates were confused by the technical terms and names and did not perform as well, possibly because they were unsure of what they knew about each festival.

Section 4

In section four (living the Jewish life) candidates generally did very well. All abilities gave good responses to Q7(b) and Q8(b), although both (c) part questions tended to be answered very descriptively.

Section 5

Section five was generally done very well. Q9 (The Synagogue) seemed more popular than Q10 (The Holocaust). Many candidates answered the Holocaust question primarily from a historical basis.

Principal Examiner's Report on Unit M - 5585 (100%), 5586 (80%)

All questions on this paper were tackled and there was no obvious imbalance between questions in any section. It would appear that the tendency which has existed in the past for students from some centres to write at length about the topic mentioned in a question without addressing the question itself was much less prevalent this year. Questions relating to varna and caste issues were answered in exactly the same way as other questions - this has not always been the case in the past.

Section 1

Q1 was generally very well answered and popular. Answers for (b) were often less objective than anticipated and reflected understanding of the personal beliefs of candidates rather than the range of understandings of moksha within Hinduism.

Q2 elicited some very good answers, although part (c) was often answered by listing the characteristics of the three gunas rather than specifically answering the question.

Section 2

Q3(c) was the question which reflected the fact that some centres are not, as yet, tutoring their students in accordance with the advice so frequently given by Edexcel more than any other. Here the various attributes of the various varnas were very frequently discussed at the expense of answering the question.

In Q4(c) lengthy summaries of the story of the Bhagavad Gita were common, but they often missed the point of the question and did not earn high marks. Good quality answers which focussed on the question stood out clearly. The (d) part of the question produced some excellent and thoughtful answers.

Section 3

Rather surprisingly Q5(b) was frequently answered in terms of 'why' Hindus go on pilgrimages rather than outlining what Hindus might do while on pilgrimage. This, again, highlights the importance of making students familiar with the board's guidelines regarding how to approach this exam.

Q6 was generally very well answered.

Section 4

Q7 and Q8 were equally popular and were generally very well answered. It is worth noting, however, that some students did not seem to know the difference between or characteristics of the various ashramas which compromised their ability to answer Q7(b) and Q8(c).

Section 5

Q9 and Q10 seemed equally popular and there was little evidence of confusion or ambiguity in answers. This is something of a change from previous years where answers relating to the Hindu Place of Worship have been noticeably more popular than those relating to Respect for Life.

Principal Examiner's Report on Unit N - 5587 (100%), 5588 (80%)

The entry for Unit N doubled this year. There was also a pleasing improvement in the level of performance. It seems that candidates from new centres had been better prepared for the demands of the examination.

Section 1

This section was generally answered well with candidates demonstrating good knowledge and understanding of spiritual liberation and the nature of God. They were not as fluent in answering the question on the equal status of men and women. A significant number of candidates did not progress from both men and women performing sewa in the langar. The candidates who did better understood the teachings of the Gurus. Self-centredness (haumai) presented a challenge to some candidates who did not move on from a basic description of the term.

Section 2

Some candidates struggled to go beyond defining Kaur and Singh on Q4(c). Others gave very good descriptions of the importance of the names but failed to give reasons for that importance. The same situation occurred with Q3(c). A significant number of candidates gave wrong information concerning Guru Angad's contributions in the development of Sikhism. The remainder of Section 2 was well answered with most candidates giving good reasons with viewpoints for the evaluation questions. Q3(b) and Q4(b) were often answered with events and contributions made by Guru Gobind Singh.

Section 3

Worship and Celebration was better answered than any other section on the exam. There were few problems with both questions. Some candidates gave Hindu answers for Q5(c) without referring to Sikhism. However, most candidates gave answers that indicated a full understanding of why Sikhs celebrate melas with good examples.

Section 4

This section highlighted only two areas of concern, that of 'private devotion' and 'why symbols are important'. Many candidates did not understand the question concerning Sikh private devotion. Answers outlining the amrit ceremony were often given. Answers for why symbols are important, rarely progressed beyond describing the Nishan Sahib or the 5 K's. It must be pointed out that description answers given when reasons are required cannot go beyond level 2. The evaluation questions, with few exceptions, were very well answered particularly Q8(d).

Section 5

Question 9 is undoubtedly the most popular question of this section and therefore the most popular of the whole exam. A significant number of candidates who did attempt question 10 confused Khalistan with Kartarpur. Q10(c) was poorly answered with very few valid reasons for differing opinions. Question 9 was not only the most popular but the best answered. Most candidates achieved full marks for Q9(a) and level 2 or higher for Q9(b) and Q9(c).

Principal Examiner's Report on Unit O - 5589 (100%) 5590 (80%)

As is usually the case, the candidates who have chosen/been entered for this paper tend to be very well prepared indeed or very obviously poorly prepared. Most marks are either very high or rather low. As such most questions have been answered very well indeed. With the exception of those listed below the questions worked well and produced interesting and appropriate answers. As in previous years, because of the diverse nature of Buddhism, some responses which gained good marks were not anticipated by the mark scheme.

Section 1

This section was very well answered indeed. Q1 and Q2 were equally popular. Some students confused the wheel of existence with the Noble Eightfold Path in Q2(b).

Section 2

Q3 was notably less popular than Q4 and when chosen was often answered with vagueness. Very few students seemed to know much about how the Dhammapada is used by Buddhists and mostly just suggested that it must be important because it is a sacred scripture. Few students seemed to know much about the tantra.

Q4 was a popular question which produced a lot of high quality answers.

Section 3

Q5 was generally very well answered by the majority of students, although part (c) was frequently answered by describing what happens at Wesak rather than explaining why the festival is important in Buddhism.

In a very similar way Q6 was generally well answered but part (c) was sometimes answered by listing various iconographic meanings of various Bhuddha rupas instead of explaining why there are many different rupas. Some students did not appear to know what Vassa was and were unable to respond to part (d) meaningfully.

Section 4

Q7 and Q8 were equally popular and well answered by most candidates. A lot of students answered Q7(c) by listing the Five Precepts, which was not strictly necessary but most of these gained a good mark because of the commentary which accompanied the list.

Section 5

Q9 was popular but a little less frequently answered than Q10. Both were generally very well answered. The evaluation (d) questions in particularly elicited high quality answers from many students. The (b) part or both Q9 and Q10 were well answered but could have been dealt with slightly better if more students had resisted the temptation to list types of worship and acceptable occupations respectively and concentrated on the explanations asked for by the questions.

Principal Examiner's Report on Unit P - 5591 (100%), 5592 (80%)

Unit P has continued its pleasing growth in entry. Performance by candidates was at a similar standard to that of previous years. Although there are many candidates who have a good knowledge of the text, there are still a number who use stories and incidents from the other gospels to illustrate their answers. Such material is not credited.

Section 1

In Q1(b), when candidates wrote about the right incident, they tended to get level 3. But a sizeable minority wrote about the call of the disciples. Q1(c) was often not answered well. Candidates often knew about James and John asking to sit at Jesus' right hand, but didn't know the ensuing conversation with Jesus. Q2(b) tended either to be answered very well, or misunderstood. There were some good answers to Q2(c), but many did not draw out the problems caused to the disciples. Whilst Q1(d) produced some well thought answers, Q2(d) seemed only to be understood by a few candidates.

Section 2

In Q3(b) many told the story about the cleansing of the Temple, but failed to relate the argument about authority that followed. Q4(b) was slightly better answered. There were some good answers produced for both Q3(c) and Q4(c) and some thoughtful answers were produced to the two evaluation questions.

Section 3

The section in general was well answered. Questions Q5(b) and Q6(b) were generally well done with many getting level 3. Q5(c) and Q6(c) were also well answered with many good explanations in both questions. Q5(d) produced some good answers whereas Q6(d) was somewhat disappointing. Whilst many were able to show that the Communion/Mass showed that it was still important, they were unable to give an alternative view.

Section 4

As is often the case with this section, many candidates underperformed. In particular, they were often unclear about the titles Son of God and Son of Man. Q7(b) was often confused with the healing of the blind man (Mark 8). Q8(b) however produced many level 3 answers. Many candidates failed to show the importance of Caesarea Philippi and many candidates related the word 'confession' in the question to Peter's denial. Some thoughtful answers were given to both (d) questions.

Section 5

Q9(a) was generally answered better than Q10(a) where candidates either didn't pick up on the fact that it should be a contemporary Christian or didn't relate their faith to the persecution. Q10(b) was answered better than Q9(b) where candidates often failed to understand the importance of the Kingdom of God as an idea in Mark's Gospel. Both evaluation questions produced some good, thoughtful answers.

Principal Moderator's Report

The performance of candidates in the coursework tasks was of a similar standard to that of last year. Most centres submitted candidate work on schedule, correctly annotated with correctly scored coursework record sheets. Overall, it was a successful moderation process that highlighted the obvious enthusiasm of most of the entrants for taking the coursework option.

However, a worrying number of centres still do not follow the instructions in the specification relating to the marking of candidates work and the completion of coursework record sheets, consequently awarding the wrong marks to their candidates. Some centres incorrectly applied the guidelines for Quality of Written Communication (QWC) clearly set out in the specification. A number of centres did not forward the work of the highest and lowest scoring candidates. All these centres have been informed in their centre reports and would be well advised to attend the coursework feedback Inset.

As the vast majority of centres selected Religion and The Media for Module 1 and A Place of Worship for Module 2, this report will only give specific feedback on these questions.

Religion and the Media

Ai Weaker candidates listed programmes from the television schedule and wrongly included programmes such as The Vicar of Dibley and Father Ted as being specifically religious with no description of the programme content. More able candidates were able to give good descriptions of the range and variety of religious broadcasts and the impact they had on different audiences.

Aii Most candidates referred to Eastenders, the most frequent themes being abortion, adultery and murder. Weaker candidates gave a description of the story line without explaining the implications of the character's actions in regard to moral or religious issues. More able candidates were able to analyse the themes in the context of religious teachings concerning taking life and deceiving others.

Aiii The candidates used a wide variety of films and television dramas to illustrate the way in which religious themes are dealt with. Those who use 'The Green Mile' produced some analysis of the conflict with religious teachings and a much more detailed description of the film with some quotes from sacred texts. Some candidates who selected 'Bend it Like Beckham' failed to recognize that the main character was Sikh. Less able candidates for all films tended to write solely about the story line.

B This was significantly weaker as candidates tended to give less developed reasons than would be expected on the Options Section of the exam. Those candidates who did approach the task as a piece of coursework gave developed and comprehensive reasoning with two viewpoints being evaluated. They gave excellent examples of programmes supporting each viewpoint, concluding with opinions supporting, disagreeing or seeing the validity of each argument concerning the stimulus statement.

A Place of Worship

Candidates attempting these tasks generally performed very well. Most candidates were clear in their descriptions of the features of a particular religion's place of worship. Unfortunately, with the exception of candidates attempting Unit K, a significant number of responses to Ai) failed to mention a specific place of worship. Candidates gave generic descriptions that could be found in most places of worship connected to a particular religion.

Most candidates also gave high level explanations and descriptions of the leader's function in each place of worship. The role and function of each religion's place of worship in the community was clearly and comprehensively explained in the majority of cases. As with other options, weaker candidates tended to describe rather than give explanations or reasons when required.

Part B of the option was particularly well answered as most candidates had strong opinions whether the requirement of collective worship is more important than individual beliefs. However, weaker candidates often gave only one viewpoint to the stimulus statement.

Statistics

5575 (Unit H) Religion and Society: Christianity and one other religion (22073 candidates)

5577 (Unit I) Christianity (2026 candidates)

5579 (Unit J) Catholic Christianity (17565 candidates)

5581 (Unit K) Islam (3130 candidates)

5583 (Unit L) Judaism (553 candidates)

5585 (Unit M) Hinduism (242 candidates)

5587 (Unit N) Sikhism (207 candidates)

5589 (Unit O) Buddhism (742 candidates)

5591.(Unit P) Mark's Gospel (8419 candidates)

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	79	66	53	40	32	24	17	10
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5576 (Unit H) Religion and Society: Christianity and one other religion (7012 candidates)

5578 (Unit I) Christianity (893 candidates)

5580 (Unit J) Catholic Christianity (2476 candidates)

5582 (Unit K) Islam (1295 candidate)

5584 (Unit L) Judaism (354 candidates)

5586 (Unit M) Hinduism (149 candidates)

5588 (Unit N) Sikhism (211 candidates)

5590 (Unit O) Buddhism (50 candidates)

5592 (Unit P) Mark's Gospel (2773 candidates)

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	98	83	68	53	43	34	25	16
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written	80	63	52	42	31	25	20	15	10
Raw mark boundary for coursework	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

For units 5576, 5578, 5580, 5582, 5584, 5586, 5588, 5590, 5592 (80% Written & 20% Coursework)

The total number of subject marks awarded to the unit as a whole is 120.

The written paper (01) contributes 80% of these 120 subject marks, ie 96 marks.

The raw marks available for this paper are 80. Therefore each raw paper mark is worth 1.2 subject marks. The raw mark awarded to the candidate is multiplied by 1.2 to give a subject mark.

The coursework paper (02) contributes 20% of the 120 subject marks, ie 24. The raw marks available for this paper are 69. Therefore each raw paper mark is worth 0.348 subject marks. The raw mark awarded to the candidate is multiplied by 0.348 to give a subject mark.

To then calculate the subject mark the two weighted paper marks are added together to give a subject mark out of 120, and the mark is rounded to the nearest whole number.

An example:

A candidate achieves the following raw marks for their papers:

	Raw Mark	Multiplier	Subject Mark
Paper 01	30	1.2	36
Paper 02	51	0.348	17.748

This gives a subject mark of 53.748, which rounds to 54.

UMS grade boundaries

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
3481	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
2481/2483	200	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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