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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A (1RA0)
Paper 1: Area of Study 1 – Study of Religion
Option 1B: Christianity

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Religious Studies A Paper 1B: Area of Study 1 – Study of Christianity (Paper code: 1RA0/1B)

The paper contributes to 50% of the overall award.

The assessment consists of four questions and candidates must answer all questions. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are to use this, rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

This area of study comprises a study in-depth of Christianity as a lived religion in the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are four sections:

- Beliefs and Teachings
- Practices
- Sources of Wisdom and Authority
- Forms of Expression and Ways of Life

Candidates had studied Christianity within the context of the wider British society.

Please note: AO stands for 'Assessment Objective'

SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point. 1.7 The problem of evil/suffering and a loving and righteous God: the problems it raises for Christians about the nature of God, including reference to omnipotence and benevolence, including Psalm 103; how the problem may cause believers to question their faith or the existence of God; **the nature and examples of natural suffering, moral suffering.** (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: Outline three things Christians consider to be examples of moral suffering.

Candidates are asked to Outline on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a list.

- An example: Outline 3 characteristics of God:
- God is creator (1 mark)
- God is creator, judge and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)
- God is creator, busy and distant. (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Busy, distant and God is creator, (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)
- Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks) (all three elements need to be correct for 1 mark)
- Creator, judge, distant (0 marks)

Most candidates were awarded 3 marks. Candidates who answered the question by defining moral suffering or gave examples of natural suffering were not awarded marks.

Examiner advice: Candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each. There is no need for development: it will not receive credit.

Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.6 *Christian eschatology: divergent Christian teachings about life after death, including the nature and significance of resurrection, judgment, heaven, and hell and purgatory, with reference to the 39 Articles of Religion and Catholic teachings; how beliefs about life after death are shown in the Bible, including reference to 2 Corinthians 5:1–10 and divergent understandings as to why they are important for Christians today

Centres should take note of the * on this question.

This refers to the specification information at the beginning of the section. Students should recognise that Christianity is one of the many religious traditions in Great Britain which include Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the specified content. Students should compare and contrast two areas of belief and practice within Christianity with one of these religions practiced in Great Britain:

- Beliefs about the afterlife and their significance (1.6)*

The question, to assess the specification, asked: 'Describe two differences between the beliefs of Christianity and another religion you have studied about life after death.

Candidates are asked **to Describe two differences** on this (b) question. (This type of question was exemplified on the sample assessment material).

Therefore, two differences between the beliefs of two religions are required, the development becomes the comparative belief. For example,“ In Christianity the soul leaves the body and there is no second earthly life, (1) whereas, in Hinduism the belief is that, after death, the atman (soul) of a person passes into a new body and life (1)”.

Many candidates seem ill prepared for this question and concentrated on Christian beliefs about life after death, in some responses candidates gave alternative Christian beliefs.

Examiner advice: Centres should be familiar with and prepare students for all parts of the specification. Centres are advised to refer to the specification, SAMS materials and online support given by the senior examination team. Centres should not rely completely on textbooks or support from social media.

Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.3 The Incarnation: the nature and **importance of the person of Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Son of God; the biblical basis of this teaching**, including John 1:1–18 and 1 Timothy 3: 16 and its significance for Christians today. (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: Explain two biblical teachings about Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates are asked to Explain two on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom a quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a reference to a source of wisdom, this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development, it does not gain a second mark for the source.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom

- The candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If markers of candidate work in centres are unsure if the quote will be accepted, use a search engine. Enter the gist of the paraphrase and 'Bible' or 'Christian teaching'.

- If the candidate states that it is in John 1:18 and then states another verse from John – then this can be awarded. We are not holding candidate to ‘verses’ but it must be the correct book.
- If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (John 1:18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Jesus and it was Paul or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

The majority of candidates answered this question well. Candidates who recognised the question being about the Incarnation and not the Son of God gained the highest marks. The majority of candidates used the source of wisdom from John 1 accurately to support the point or development made.

Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates are assessed on AO2, Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question is **Evaluate** this statement **considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion** – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise, judge the value of, the arguments to reach the higher levels).

Many candidates gave excellent answers citing reasons for and against but not considering the value of them or analysing/evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidate's progression to the higher levels.

Many centres had attempted to introduce a writing frame to encouraged appraisal, but the candidates did not appear to understand the demands of the skill required.

Some candidates wrote 'This is a strong argument because ...' and repeated the previous point or giving another point, or reason referring to the statement not the argument given.

In other examples, Candidates wrote 'This is a weak argument because...' and gave generic statements such as, it's not in the Bible .

The majority of answers did not address the reasons for the diversity within the beliefs of Christianity.

In some cases, students focussed on the strength/weakness of an argument but had not demonstrated any understanding of religion and belief.

Examiner advice: centres should refer to training materials online. Candidates require the religious understanding of the diversity within the religious tradition, and the arguments for and against before they can begin to evaluate.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.2 The creation of the universe and of humanity: **the biblical account of creation and divergent ways in which it may be understood by Christians,** including as literal and metaphorical; the role of the Word and Spirit in creation including John 1:1–18 and Genesis 1–3; the importance of creation for Christians today. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was *(d) The Bible holds the complete truth about Creation.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

In response to this question candidates gave the literal and metaphorical responses to the biblical account and the better answers referred to the truth within both viewpoints. Most candidates did this confidently but failed to consider the arguments and why the Christians had different responses.

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point 2.3 The nature and purpose of prayer: **the nature of** and examples of the different types of prayer; set prayers; informal prayer and **the Lord's Prayer** including Matthew 6:5–14; when each type might be used and why; divergent Christian attitudes towards the importance of each type of prayer for Christians today. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was Outline three features of the Lord's Prayer.'

Candidates answered this question well, they had knowledge of either the contents of the prayer or the elements of prayer contained within it (e.g. repentance). The mark scheme allowed for both approaches.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point 2.2 The role of the sacraments in Christian life and their practice in two denominations: the role of the sacraments/ordinance as a whole; the nature and importance of the meaning and celebration of baptism and the Eucharist in at least two denominations, including reference to the 39 Articles XXV-XXXVI; **divergent Christian attitudes towards the use and number of sacraments in Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions.** (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was Explain two different Christian attitudes towards the number of sacraments celebrated.

In an example of a 4-mark response the candidate gives two developed differences. For example:

- Some Christians only have two sacraments. (1) This is because Jesus only commanded his followers to share in baptism and communion (1)
- Catholic Christians have seven sacraments (1) they represent times that God communicates his grace (1)

In some responses students were able to list and discuss the various sacraments celebrated but were unable to explain the different attitudes to the number of them within different Christian traditions. The specification clearly indicates this as part of the bullet point but many centres appeared not to have prepared candidates for this.

Examiner advice: Refer to the specification bullet point and cover all the different parts of it. These bullet points are the basis of question setting.

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 2.1 Christian worship: liturgical and non-liturgical forms of worship, including activities which are informal and individual, including reference to the Book of Common Prayer; when each form might be used and why; divergent Christian attitudes towards the practices, **meaning and significance of liturgical and non-liturgical forms of worship in Christian life today, with reference to denominations which worship with less structure, such as some Pentecostal churches.** (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: Explain two reasons why some denominations have less structure to their worship.

Candidates are asked to Explain two on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a reference to a source of wisdom, this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development, it does not gain a second mark for the source.

Most candidates responded well to this question. On occasions answers were very generic such as, its more fun which needed to be explained to gain a mark. Most candidates failed to supply a source of wisdom.

Examiner advice: Centres struggling to find sources of wisdom should refer to the specification and/or previous mark schemes.

Question 2 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two. Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 2.6 The future of the Christian Church: Church growth, the history and **purpose of missionary** and evangelical work including reference to Mark 16:9–20; divergent ways this is put into practice by the Church locally, nationally and globally; Christian attitudes to why evangelical work is important for the Church and for individual Christians. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was "Missionary work is no longer relevant in the world today."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

This question engaged candidates of all abilities and produced a wide range of marks. All candidates should be encouraged to answer every question because every mark is important. Many candidates did not gain more than level two because they did not consider the value of the arguments given in answering the question.

A significant number of candidates confused missionary work with charity work. Where this could be linked to the sharing of the gospel/evangelism marks were awarded.

Question 3 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Bullet point 3.6: The growth and development of the Church: the establishment, development and growth of the Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches; changes in the Church as the Body of Christ including interpretations of 1 Corinthians 12, the Filioque controversy and the Reformation; and divergent understandings of the significance of the development of diverse denominations within the Church today. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was Outline three denominations within the Christian Church today.

Candidates answered this question confidently, However, due to the familiar information needed for the question many students reverted to writing a list not outlining and therefore could only be awarded 1 mark for a list.

Question 3 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Bullet point 3.1 The development **and structure of the Bible** and its unity as the Word of God: **Old Testament: law, history, prophets, writings;** and New Testament: gospels, letters; divergent interpretations of the authority of the Bible; the Bible as the literal Word of God, the inspired Word of God, source of guidance and teaching including 2 Timothy 3:16 and Dei Verbum Chapter 3; the implications of these understandings for Christians today. *(bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was Explain two features of the Old Testament.

Most candidates performed well on this question. The mark scheme allowed for a variety of approaches, for example,

- The first books of the Bible contain the law (1) for example the book of Leviticus (1)
- There is a section of the Old Testament that contains historical information (1) for example the books of Kings (1)
- The account of David and Goliath. (1) There are several accounts that are unique to the Old Testament. (1)

Question 3c

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Bullet point 2.4: Jesus as the Word of God including John 1 and a role model: beliefs and teachings about Jesus as the Word of God; divergent understandings of his role in modelling practices, including Mark 8:34–38; the divergent implications of Jesus example in showing love for others, forgiveness, servanthood, reconciliation and social justice, and in establishing the Kingdom of God, the significance of these beliefs for Christians today. *(bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was: Explain two teachings about Jesus as the Word of God.

Candidates linked this question to Incarnation and therefore in some answers they did not answer the question. There is clearly a link between the two which needed to be identified is this approach was taken. Many candidates wrote about Jesus teaching the words of God, the mark scheme allowed for this approach and therefore marks were awarded:

Jesus as the Word of God reveals God's glory (1), by spreading God's word while teaching and performing miracles (1), the glory of the one and only, which came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14) (1). The message that God revealed through the prophets during the Old Testament period was now made human with the coming of Christ. (1)

The source of wisdom to support the alternative approaches were not given, candidates relied on John 1, which did not always support their point or development.

Examiner advice: Centres are advised to ensure candidates able to recognise key concepts and provide the relevant information. For example, the Incarnation, the Word etc. and not confuse them.

Question 3 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Bullet point 3.8 : The role of women in the Church: divergent understandings of the basis of roles within the Bible, including interpretations of 1 Corinthians 14:33–40 and Romans 16:1–16; the historical development of **attitudes towards women as leaders, and the different roles of women today in the Church** and Christian life; **divergent approaches to the role of women in different denominations.** *(bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was "Women should have leadership roles within the Church."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

Candidates when responding to this statement failed to stay on point and talk about the roles within the Church. Many referred to roles in the family, the home or society in general. These points could not be awarded.

Candidates also failed to differentiate between the different Christian traditions, many gave non-religious opinions which were not required by the question and could not be awarded.

Examiner advice: Candidates should be reminded that the question gives all the information to answer the question. Which viewpoints are needed and if it is only Christian teachings it is directing them to the diversity in the interpretation of scriptures. If it refers to different Christian points of view, as in this case, the implication is that different traditions within Christianity have a different view on this topic and these should be explored.

Question 4 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Forms of Expression and Ways of Life

Bullet point: 4.7 The nature and **use of traditional styles of music in worship:** including hymns, psalms and worship songs; the way traditional styles of music are used to express belief, including examples such as Gregorian Chant and reference to Musicum Sacrum; the divergent ways in which they may be used in church and other settings, when each might be used and why. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was Outline three examples of traditional music used in churches.

The specification identifies examples of traditional music and the mark scheme awarded these

- One example of traditional music is the Gregorian Chant (1)
- Psalms are sung in churches (1)
- Masses can be acapella at times (1)
- Some 13th century Carols are sung (1)

- 'How Great Thou Art' is a traditional hymn sung in churches (1).

The majority of candidates performed well on this question. On occasion some candidates gave reasons why traditional music was better than contemporary music in worship, which was a previous question and could not be awarded.

Question 4 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Forms of Expression and Ways of Life

Bullet point 4.8 The nature and **use of contemporary music in worship**: including hymns and worship songs; the way contemporary music is used to express belief, including examples such as the work of Graham Kendrick and the Casting Crowns, **the divergent ways in which it may be used in Church and other settings**, when it might be used and why. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was: Explain two places, other than a church, contemporary worship music might be used.

The focus of this question was the alternative settings where contemporary worship music might be used. The majority of candidates responded well to this question. Examples such as school assemblies and in the streets for missionary work/evangelism were both popular examples. A minority of candidates re-wrote the question into a previous one about the reasons why contemporary music was preferred to traditional music which could not be credited.

Question 4 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Forms of Expression and Ways of Life

Bullet point 4.1: The meaning and **significance of paintings and drawings within Christianity** with reference to two specific pieces and Catechism of the Catholic Church 25022503: the way these are used to express belief by the artist and those who observe the art, and the divergent ways in which paintings and drawings may be used in church and other settings. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was: Explain two reasons why paintings and drawings are important within Christianity. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates appeared to find this question challenging. They were prepared to say why they should or should not be used, how the artist might have expressed belief or how they are used. Some information in answer to these could be awarded, however, much did not explain why they were important. Those candidates who recognised the importance of the artwork in Christianity expressed the viewpoint that it was important

for illiterate Christians and/or Christians. Many presented the information in a way which implied all Christians were illiterate.

Examiner advice: Centres should unpick the bullet points with candidates to prepare them for the questions that may be set.

Question 4 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Forms of Expression and Ways of Life

Bullet point 4.3: The meaning and significance of sculpture for Christians: the way these are used to express belief by the artist and those who observe the art, the way these are used to express belief with reference to Catechism of the Catholic Church 2501; **the divergent ways in which sculptures and statues may be used in church** and other settings, for example in Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was

Sculptures help people to worship God.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

The candidates who struggled with the 4c question were able to confidently apply the knowledge to this question about the arguments for and against the use of statues and idolatry. The majority of students did not consider the arguments or reasons for the diversity between the Christian traditions and therefore did not reach the higher levels.

Key advice from examiner:

- Centres must teach to the specification, making sure candidates are prepared for all parts of the bullet points in preparation for the questions
- In (a) style questions, candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each. There is no need for development: it will not receive credit.
- The explain questions require two developed points, however, students should also be prepared to describe where indicated on the specification.

- The (d) items need an understanding of religion and belief, as well as the ability to evaluate the arguments in order to reach a conclusion. Centres may wish to consider the differentiation of teaching to enable some students of different abilities to concentrate on learning the information needed before embarking on the evaluation.
- Candidates should be directed to read the bullet points in the (d) question and understand that they guide them to which viewpoints they should be providing. Centres may wish to consider identifying on the specification the different traditions/viewpoints within Christianity identified that could be used to answer these questions. The diversity within the religion is the key factor in appraising the arguments. Why do they not all agree?