

Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCSE

GCSE Religious Studies Units H-P (5575/5592)

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Principal Moderator's Report

Coursework entry was lower than previous years. This is understandable because of the new specification not having a coursework element. Overall, centres were efficient and timely in the marking and submission of candidate's work. The moderation team dealt with only a few centres that had not followed procedures. These centres have been notified of any problems via their feedback report. Some centres do forget to multiply the raw score (out of 21) by three as instructed on the cover sheet to give an overall score out of 69. The work is generally marked correctly but the scores submitted to Edexcel need to be amended if this error occurs. Again, they will have been notified of this issue

Religion and the Media:

In part (a)(i), most centres presented work that was correctly centred on the tasks assigned by looking at those programmes that were specifically religious in content. However, a few candidates still consider the Vicar of Dibley and Father Ted to be specifically religious.

In part (a)(ii), Coronation Street, Eastenders, Neighbours and Home and Away were predominant for this task. The issues of abortion, infidelity, and unlawful killing being the main themes analysed.

In part (a)(iii), the films used for this task by candidates were drawn from a wide selection. A significant number of candidates were able to demonstrate the religious or moral themes being addressed. Candidates showed a good understanding of the required tasks set by the coursework criteria. As last year, less able candidates presented their work for this task at an improved level to previous years.

For part (b), candidates had two approaches to the stimulus statement. Some candidates gave excellent examples of programmes, with each viewpoint supported and concluded with opinions either supporting, disagreeing or seeing the validity of each argument. In the main, the less able candidates tended to give reasons that were less developed.

A Place of Worship:

In part (a)(i), a number of responses did not mention a specific place of worship regardless of the religion studied.

In part (a)(ii), candidates gave good explanations and descriptions of the leader's function in the place of worship.

For part (a)(iii), the role and function of each religion's place of worship in the community was clearly and comprehensively explained in the majority of cases.

Part (b) of this option was particularly well answered. Most candidates had strong opinions whether the requirement of collective worship is more important than individual beliefs. Some candidates gave only one viewpoint to the stimulus statement. Weaker candidates tended to describe rather than give explanations or reasons when required.

Unit H (5575/5576)

Religion and society based on a study of Christianity and at least one other religion

Section 1

This section was generally well answered. Question 1 was much more popular than Question 2 with almost three quarters of the candidates choosing to answer the first question.

For Question 1(a) many candidates choose to define the Church as a place rather than as a community of Christians. In general this was not repeated for the other part (a) questions on the rest of the paper where candidates had clearly learned the glossary definitions and were able to reproduce them accurately. Part (b) caused the majority of candidates very few problems as they were able to outline the two main attitudes to Christian involvement in politics often with appropriate teachings. In part (c) very few candidates provided an explanation for why Christians use the Bible to make moral decisions beyond a very basic statement that it is the Word of God. Some candidates often also then went on to discuss the other methods which Christians may use which were not linked to the question and therefore could not be rewarded. In part (d) many candidates scored well by including a basic argument why it is important to be nice backed up by a Christian teaching such as the Golden Rule, followed by a simple argument against.

Question 2(b) allowed most candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of the Welfare State, although many spent a significant amount of time outlining the historical background to the development of the Welfare State and for some candidates this led to not actually answering the question that was set. Part (c) caused similar issues for candidates as Question 1(c) with many offering one explanation for the authority of the Church followed by the other methods of making moral decisions. Part (d) produced some excellent responses from candidates who had clearly considered the contrasting reasons for and against Christian involvement in politics. However, there were some very one sided discussions of the issue. This was particularly evident when the religious view and the personal opinion offered were making the same argument. This limited the awarding of marks for some candidates and this issue was also noted on other part (d) questions throughout the paper.

Section 2

Both questions were evenly attempted by the candidates. This section was answered very knowledgeably by the majority of candidates reflecting a general level of interest among young people in environmental issues.

In Question 3(b) the majority of candidates responded by referring to Islam and many demonstrated accurate knowledge of Muslim teaching on both creation and the environment. Less able candidates could not always link both creation and the environment in this question. For part (c) many candidates wrote very passionately in response to this question and many used accurate religious teachings, often from more than one religion, to back up their explanation. It was possible to achieve full marks for this question by writing a purely secular response and those candidates who attempted this approach used accurate scientific reasoning and factual information to back up their arguments. Some candidates remain confused when considering the effects of pollution on the ozone layer, often inaccurately attributing damage to the ozone layer to carbon dioxide and attributing global warming to the hole in the ozone layer. A number of candidates also considered the effects of deforestation on the environment, which could not be credited as deforestation is linked to the overuse of natural resources rather than pollution. Part (d) referred specifically to scientists and some candidates did not include a religious perspective thereby limiting their potential marks to level 2. Others found it difficult to present an argument in support of the stimulus statement. However, some candidates successfully used the fact that the hole in the ozone layer is shrinking to suggest that scientists could solve the problem of climate change.

For Question 4(b) less able candidates often presented their own views as Christian teaching. More able candidates used the Creation story to explain the range of Christian attitudes to animal rights. In part (c) the majority of candidates responded by referring to Islam and many demonstrated accurate knowledge of Muslim teaching on the environment. There were also some very good responses based on the other main faith teachings. For part (d) a number of candidates did not include a religious perspective and many were not able to construct an argument that agreed with the stimulus quote.

Section 3

Twice as many candidates attempted Question 5 as Question 6. Question 5(b) caused few problems for most students although some candidates did not write more than a basic statement that bullying is wrong. A number of more able candidates tried to justify positive attitudes to bullying although this was not required by the question. For part (c) there were some excellent explanations. In general the less able candidates went on to explain why some Christians are not pacifists even though this was not required by the question and therefore this could not be credited. For part (d) many answers were limited by candidates not considering a religious perspective although many candidates used "blessed are the peacemakers", the Decalogue "Honour your father and mother" and the example of Jesus or the Golden Rule to good effect.

For Question 6(b) many candidates wrote about punishment rather than forgiveness and often specifically about capital punishment. This was not required by the question therefore could not be credited. For part (c) many candidates tended to refer to religious people being against bullying in rather vague terms. More able candidates were able to link the attitudes to relevant teachings from a variety of Holy Books and church teachings. Almost every answer referred to the Golden Rule. In part (d) some candidates were not able to give a specific religious reason for their arguments in this question although more able candidates used "Turn the other cheek" and "Blessed are the peacemakers" to good effect. Those who chose to refer to Islam tended to use evidence such as Islam means peace and that Muslims will be judged on their behaviour in the afterlife and so should work for peace. Many candidates cited examples of religious wars particularly the Crusades to support their point of view that religion would not bring about world peace.

Section 4

For Question 7(b) more able candidates showed themselves very familiar with this material and there were some excellent answers on teachings about punishment from both Islam and the other major world religions. However, many candidates often did not include relevant teachings. A small but significant proportion choose to only consider attitudes to capital punishment. In part (c) the vast majority of candidates were able to give one simple difference between a sin and a crime although often their selection of examples was not good. Very few candidates were able to give any further differences between a sin and a crime. The most able candidates illustrated their answers with reference to sins such as blasphemy and crimes that aren't sins with reference to Rosa Parks. A number of candidates also used the person they had studied as a prisoner of conscience to illustrate the difference. These candidates also tended to mention that crimes would be judged and punished on earth by man whereas sins would be judged and punished by God in the afterlife. Part (d) was generally well answered, perhaps reflecting the level of interest in capital punishment. A small but significant proportion of candidates did not refer to a religion thereby limiting the number of marks they could achieve. Many candidates felt that capital punishment was an appropriate punishment and backed up their argument with reference to Thomas Aquinas.

In Question 8(b) more able candidates were familiar with the material and scored well, while less able candidates tended to give very unspecific answers and in some cases wrote at length about the court system which did not address the question set. For part (c) a number of candidates were not aware that some Muslims do not agree with capital punishment and therefore were not able to gain higher marks despite often being very well versed in the reasons why most Muslims support capital punishment. In part (d) the vast majority of candidates discussed the stimulus quote with accurate reference to Situation Ethics and cited the examples of prisoners of conscience. Many also used the idea that without the law society degenerates into chaos and produced very detailed answers.

Section 5

Many candidates had clearly been very well prepared for the demands of Section 5. Of the two, Question 9 was by far the most popular with almost 75% of all the candidates attempting the medical ethics question. However, it was clear by this stage in the examination a significant proportion of candidates ran out of time and used bullet points which therefore meant they were not able to achieve all the Quality of Written Communication (QWC) marks which are also awarded in this section. Many of these candidates found themselves in this situation by writing extra material for Sections 1 to 4 which often did not add to the total marks as full marks had already been awarded before the material on the additional answer sheets had been considered. It is advised that Section 5 should take approximately 30 minutes and candidates should not use bullet points or abbreviations and should use good spelling, punctuation and write in paragraphs to gain QWC marks.

For Question 9(a) a number of candidates confused genetic engineering with infertility treatment. However, many candidates produced a very creditable account of different Muslim attitudes to genetic engineering. Those who outlined only one attitude were limited to level 3 for this response. Some candidates used examples of genetic engineering, such as improved food production and genetically modified crops which could not be described as involving medical ethics and could therefore not be credited. For part (b) many candidates found it difficult to produce a non-religious explanation for attitudes to transplant surgery particularly with reference to those who are opposed to it. They often wrote about a Christian or Muslim attitude without reference to the scripture involved. However, many candidates were able to provide two good reasons why some non-religious people are in favour of transplant surgery and two reasons to explain why some are not. A few candidates confused transplant surgery with infertility treatment. For part (c) some candidates did not give a religious perspective and many of these candidates found it difficult to defend the statement seeming to believe that only "good" people have the right to have children. There were some very good answers but some candidates wrote at length about the reasons why paedophiles, rapists, addicts and smokers should be prevented from having children. Many of the more able candidates demonstrated a thorough knowledge of religious attitudes to the family and detail of which fertility treatments are considered acceptable and which were not. However, this information was not always related back to the question and therefore sometimes this material could not be credited.

For Question 10(a) many candidates had clearly learnt the different Christian attitudes to the scientific cosmology and were able to accurately present the three main attitudes attributing them to the correct group of Christians. A number of candidates were not able to link the different attitudes to different denominations. Those candidates who outlined the attitudes as "some Christians" and "other Christians" avoided the problems that arose when candidates misnamed the groups, for example attributing complete rejection of the scientific cosmology to the Liberals. In part (b) some candidates found it difficult to explain how scientists could be religious. Many candidates appeared to read the question as 'explain why some religious people are scientists' and then implied that they became scientists to find proof of God or to be in a position to refute the work of their colleagues. However there were many full and well developed answers to explain why some scientists are people of faith and the use of historical examples was refreshing. For part (c) many candidates were able to provide sophisticated scientific arguments in opposition to the stimulus quote and many quoted the "God of the gaps". Many more able candidates were able to demonstrate that even some religious people will accept a scientific explanation of the creation of the universe.

Unit I (5577/5578)

Christianity

It was clear that some candidates both know and understand the main beliefs, values and traditions of Christianity as well as what it means to live the Christian life.

Section 1

Question 2 was the slightly more popular question. Part 1(a) was well answered with most candidates being able to give two symbols of the Holy Spirit. In part (b) many candidates showed a good knowledge of the Apostles' Creed but it was clear a number of candidates were not aware of the Creed. There were some excellent answers in part (c), showing a high level of understanding especially from the more able candidates. In part (d) there were some very good answers but a number of candidates did not give a valid alternative viewpoint.

Part (b) of Question 2 was generally well answered but a significant number of candidates turned it into a question about the Trinity. In part (c) it was clear many candidates knew the parable but did not always explain its importance for Christians. Part (d) was generally well understood with some good responses but candidates did not always give an alternative point of view.

Section 2

Question 4 was slightly more popular than Question 3. Question 3(a) was well answered with many candidates giving the glossary definition. In part (b) there were many good answers showing that candidates were aware of the different Christian attitudes towards celibacy of the clergy. For part (c) there were some very good level 4 answers where it was clear candidates understood the importance of the Bible for Christians. In part (d) there were some excellent examples of level 4 answers, but many candidates focused on the church as a building not the Church.

In response to Question 4 part (b) many candidates were able to outline the role of a bishop but a significant number were not aware of how a Bishop's role is different from that of a priest. In part (c) more candidates than in the past were aware of what apostolic means, but in general candidates found it harder to explain why it is important for Christians to believe that the Church is apostolic.

Section 3

Question 6 was slightly more popular than Question 5. Part (b) of Question 5 was well answered and most candidates were aware of the main features of an infant baptism service. For part (c) there were some excellent answers but a significant number of candidates described how the Eucharist was celebrated in different Christian traditions rather explaining why it is important. In part (d), once again, there were some very good answers, but a number of candidates found it harder to give reasons in support of the statement.

For Question 6(b) many candidates continue to describe Holy Week and Good Friday rather than specific Easter celebrations. Part (d) generally a well answered question that showed candidates could evaluate the value of fasting and the giving of charity during Lent quite well.

Section 4

Question 7 was more popular than Question 8. In Question 7(a) some candidates could not gain 2 marks as they did not go beyond describing concern as being worried. Part (b) was a well answered question but a significant number of candidates still quoted the Golden Rule as one of the Ten Commandments. In part (c) the vast majority of candidates could describe the life and work of such Christians as Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King but a significant number did not answer the question of how they had shown Christian values in their life.

There were some excellent answers from candidates in response to Question 8 (b). They clearly knew the text from the Sermon on the Mount about money but too many answers were too generalised and vague.

Section 5

Question 9 was much more popular than Question 10. Question 9(a) was well answered with many top level answers describing the role and function of a church. Many candidates answered part (b) well showing they explained the purpose of the features in a church. Part (c) was generally well answered with some very thoughtful and well considered responses.

For Question 10(a) there were some very good answers. It was clear candidates has studied a religious community. For part (b) a number of candidates only saw vocation as becoming a member of a religious community or taking Holy Orders. Part (c) was also a well answered question demonstrating some excellent evaluation skills from the candidates.

Unit J (5579/5580) Catholic Christianity

Overall, candidates demonstrated a good level of understanding of, and an ability to evaluate Catholic teaching. As is remarked upon more specifically below, there continues to be confusion about the distinction between the 'Church' and the church as a building.

Section 1

In part 1(a), most candidates could name two symbols of the Holy Spirit. Whilst in part 1(b) was answered well, a number of candidates did not notice that the question referred to beliefs about Jesus found in the Apostles Creed and did not achieve marks. Some candidates found part 1(c) challenging, and were able to talk about salvation only in terms of being freed from sin or going to heaven. In part 1(d) many candidates were only able to say that the Trinity can appear to propose three gods, but that for Christians the Trinity is a way of describing one God. Some candidates were able to develop these points, or to point to the Christian belief in one God found in the Creeds and the Bible.

Part (a) of Question 2 was well answered overall, but some candidates confused faith with various notions of loyalty. In part (b), some candidates spoke about God's actions, rather than his nature, though many candidates knew that Christians believe God to be omnipotent, omniscient and all loving, for example. Part (c) was well answered by those candidates who knew the parable. Some candidates though the question referred to the Good Shepherd. In part (d) many candidates were able to discuss the Christian belief in forgiveness alongside the challenge some people face when asked to forgive serious wrongs.

Section 2

Question 3 wasn't as popular as question 4. For part (a) of Question 3 many candidates were able to give a good definition of 'Holy'. In part (b) candidates who answered this question did well, knowing the rules about celibacy and the arguments that are put forward in support, such as following in the steps of Jesus. In part (c) most candidates knew what the Papacy is and what the Pope does, but fewer candidates were able to give a comprehensive account of why it is important to Catholics. Whilst many knew how to argue that the Church was a means to salvation in part (d), fewer candidates were able to address the idea that it is the only means to salvation and therefore to offer a strong opposing argument.

In part (a) most candidates knew it is a book, even a holy book, but many candidates could have stated more than it is the Christian holy book. In part (b), once again there are still many candidates who cannot distinguish Church from church. Many marks can be lost due to the confusion. This question was asking about such qualities of the Church as its unity or holiness. Many candidates responded of it as a place or somewhere to go to pray. Part (c) was well done, with almost all candidates having a measure of understanding of the importance of Mary for Catholics. However, in part (d) candidates had difficulty in responding to the question about whether the Church is out of touch, with many candidates simply offering the evidence that fewer people go to church these days, or that the Mass is boring. Some candidates were able to talk about the role of the Magisterium in updating teachings, or to offer the view that celibacy, or the ban on women priests, is a sign of the Church's lack of contact with modern reality.

Section 3

In Question 5, part (a) there was a deal of confusion between contrition and absolution and therefore some candidates did not answer the question set. For part (b) most of those candidates who answered this question knew the main features of baptism. In part (c) there were some excellent answers to the question about the Eucharist, some candidates displaying a sophisticated understanding of Catholic beliefs. Part (d) was also well answered, with most candidates able to look at both point is view and to offer supporting reasons.

The same issue seen in Question 5 part (a) was seen in part (a) of Question 6. In part (b) of Question 6 only a few candidates recognised that Easter begins with the Easter Vigil. Most answers gave a survey of activities from Shrove Tuesday to Good Friday and very few went on to mention Easter Sunday at all. Candidates should know the distinction between Lent, Holy Week and Easter. In part (c) the importance of the Sacrament of Anointing was less well understood than the Eucharist. Nevertheless, there were some full, well developed answers.

Section 4

In Question 7 part (a) most candidates knew the meaning of 'concern'. In part (b) there were some candidates who thought that 'love thy neighbour' or the Golden Rule is one of the Ten Commandments, but most candidates scored well on this question. In part (c) many candidates offered only a biography of Mother Theresa, without addressing the specific point about how the person selected showed Christian values. Part (d) was well answered, with many candidates knowing helpful teachings and incidents from the New Testament.

Question 8 part (a) most candidates knew the Golden Rule, though some thought it was 'love others as I have loved you'. Part (b) was not very well answered. Many candidates knew a good deal of teaching from the New Testament on money, and also some of the incidents such as the 'rich young man'. But they did not always distinguish those teachings that are in the Sermon on the Mount. In part (c) some of the answers about service were vague and general ('because it is what a Christian should do'), but some answers were able to support their explanation with appropriate references to Jesus' teachings and his own actions. Part (d) was well answered. Candidates knew both the importance of the Ten Commandments, but also the significance of obeying them alone (losing sight of the significance of the Sermon on the Mount, for example, or even the law of the land).

Section 5

In Question 9, part (a) most candidates wrote about the parish church rather than the cathedral and many of them demonstrated a full knowledge of the role played by the church and parish. A few candidates were unaware that the church has other functions than as a place for Sunday Mass. In part (b) the features were well known, well understood and well explained. In part (c) some candidates responded with a description of different forms of worship. Some of these candidates would have benefited from help in how to use that kind of knowledge to construct an argument. Some candidates did answer this part of the question well, explaining, for example, that as God is all knowing and everywhere he knows about even private acts of worship and welcomes them or, alternatively, that God would want Christians to worship him through the Sacraments initiated by Jesus.

In part (a) not all the responses understood that a 'religious community' refers to a community in religious vows, despite the fact that it is a key term in the glossary. There were therefore some answers describing the work of CAFOD, for example. Those who did respond as intended were usually able to describe three or more features of the life and work of the community. In part (b) the topic was not as well known as the features of a

church. Many candidates described various kinds of vocation, or interpreted vocation to mean the call to the priesthood or religious life. Fewer candidates were able to respond to the actual question, about why vocation is important for Christians. In part (c) those candidates who understood the term contemplative life answered this question very well, recognising the importance some Christians attach to prayer and devotion, in contrast with the value of service and spreading the Gospel demonstrated by going out like the apostles.

Unit K (5581/5582)

Islam

There a number of very good scripts where candidates have been able to express themselves clearly and cogently in response to the set tasks. The major points highlighted in this report relate to two very basic principles of answering GCSE questions. Examples are given under the various sections below.

The first issue is the tendency for candidate to miss the point of the word 'explain', with which almost all (c) questions begin. This word is intended to trigger a response which in terms of 'reasons', which are likely to include the word 'because' - in fact, it is usually helpful if candidates get into the habit of using this word, so that it prompts the kind of response expected. So if the task is to 'explain why' Muslims hold a particular belief or act in a particular way, the answer will highlight the reasons for this. The second difficulty encountered by some candidates is that they appear to have not read the question correctly, and so miss the point of it in a particular way. Sometimes they miss a key word out of the question. This occurs most often in part (d) questions, where the words 'showing that you have considered another point of view' mean that candidates, to gain full marks, need to be able to show that they are aware that some people have a different point of view from their own - they don't need to agree with it in any way, they just need to show that they are aware of it.

The following comments are primarily intended to provide further guidance in dealing with these two important aspects of the examination.

Section 1

The part (a) and (b) questions in this Section did not generally cause difficulties. Question 1(c) about Akhirah makes it clear that the task is for candidates to give some reasons to show they understand why this belief is important for Muslims. A simple outline of what the belief is about does not answer the question, and can only reach level 1. The answer needs to show that this belief is important because it influences the way Muslims lead their lives, or because it is about their eternal destiny, or because it is taught in the Qur'an, the foundation of all Islamic belief. Up to four different reasons will reach full marks, or candidates can also get full marks by developing their reasons further to show why the belief is important, such as by giving examples of the way in which belief in Akhirah influences their daily lives. The same principle applies in Question 2(c), although in this case some candidates often ignored the words 'as creator' and simply answered about belief in Allah generally. Question 1(d) was usually answered well, with most candidates able to give at least one reason for and one reason against the point the view expressed. However, in Question 2(d) many candidates misread the question, and responded to the point of view 'All Muslims will go to heaven' which is very different from 'Only Muslims ...'

Section 2

This Section was generally well answered and presented few difficulties to most candidates, except for those who answered Question 3(c) by simply giving a description of what the hijrah was, or what happened during the Prophet's journey. A few candidates explained at some length why the Prophet left Makkah, which was what the question asked. Both part (d) questions enabled most candidates to show their awareness of at least one reason for, and one reason against, the viewpoint given.

Section 3

Both part (a) and (b) questions were usually dealt with accurately and thoroughly, although a significant minority confused Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Adha. Question 5(c) about the importance of fasting was generally well answered, many candidates giving a good range of reasons to explain their answers. Likewise, Question 6(d) provoked a number of interesting answers showing an awareness of the debate about whether the performance of a particular action, in this case facing the qiblah, in itself is evidence of unity, or whether there are other factors to do with beliefs and values which really make for unity.

Section 4

The two part (c) questions, about dress and about halal and haram, once again help to illustrate the principle in the second paragraph above. There were a number of very full and detailed answers setting out the dress code for Muslim men and women, or giving examples of matters which are halal or haram (not just confined to defining permitted or forbidden foods); these answers still only reached level one, because they offered no explanation or reasons for why these matters are important for Muslims. However, it is also important to mention here a number of very clear and perceptive answers which dealt fully, for example, with the concept of modesty, and explored why this concept is so important in Islam, especially within the context of western secular society; or wrote about why living in such a society makes clarity about what is permitted and what is forbidden so important. There were also very well reasoned answers to Question 8(d) about relationships between the sexes before marriage.

Section 5

Almost all candidates answered Question 9. The main weakness highlighted at the beginning of this report was best illustrated in Question 9(a) and (b). Question 9(a) required candidates to describe features of a mosque 'which remind Muslims of Allah'. Many simply described any or all features without reference to Allah. Answers which gained the higher marks made links between, for example, calligraphy and the name of Allah, or the Adhan called from the minaret and the reminder to pray to Allah, or the place of ablution and the importance of being pure in the presence of Allah. The majority of candidates, in Question 9(b) answered the question as though it read 'Describe what an imam does in a Sunni mosque', and gave a full catalogue of his functions and duties (level 1) without offering any reason as to why the imam is important. The limited number of better answers explained that his leadership of prayer is his main function because that is the purpose of a mosque. Likewise, he is important because he helps to establish unity in the ummah, or because he helps the community to live according to Shari'ah in a western secular society, or because he explains how the teaching of the Qur'an is to be applied today.

Unit L (5583/5584)

Judaism

There was a full range of candidate ability. Some candidates were excellently prepared and showed admirable levels of very specific and detailed knowledge and understanding and were able to outline beliefs and celebrations in fine detail.

Section 1

In this section, many candidates knew the key words and could outline Jewish beliefs about the Messiah in Question 1(b). However, some less able candidates did not appear to understand that Jesus is not seen as the Jewish Messiah. Even the more able candidates were not always able to explain why the Almighty as Creator is important in Question 1(c). Some of the less able candidates did not seem to know what the Tenakh is in Question 2(c).

Section 2

In Section 2, a few candidates could outline the features of Hasidic Judaism in Question 3(b) or the three ways Orthodox Jews differ from Reform/Liberal Jews in Question 4(b). Question 4(c) about why it is important not to work on Shabbat produced much better responses than Question 3(c) which was about the Mishnah. It was evident in Question 4(d) that some candidates did not know about the Codes and Responsa.

Section 3

In Question 5(b) there were some clear answers from candidates about the Simchat Torah, similarly in Question 6(b) about how Pesach is celebrated in the home. Candidates generally performed better on Question 5(c) about Rosh Hashanah than in Question 6(c) where they were not generally able to write about the significance of special clothing for prayer. Responses to Question 6(d) about festivals being the best way to pass on the faith scored well. However, some candidates could not really differentiate between the different festivals in this section.

Section 4

The majority of candidates knew the key words in this section, but there was a little confusion over brit milah (Question 7(b)) and Bar Mitzvah (Question 8(c)) among some less able candidates. The majority of candidates were well prepared on mourning rituals in Question 8(b) and the significance of Kosher foods in Question 8(d).

Section 5

In Section 5, the majority of candidates answered Question 10 on the Holocaust. A few candidates tended to give only a historical answer to the question. It was clear that the majority of candidates had looked into this issue in a thorough manner and could answer the question well. A large number of candidates answered part (c) of this question well as they were able to emphasise with reasons for forgetting or not forgetting the Holocaust and several candidates made mention of visits to concentration camps. In Question 9, the role of the rabbi (part (a)) and features of the synagogue (part (b)) were answered well.

Unit M (5585/5586)

Hinduism

Most candidates showed a very high level of knowledge and understanding and produced some excellent answers in the examination.

As in previous years candidates did not always gain marks because they did not actually answer the question asked, this is certainly the case with many responses to part (c) questions, where the word 'why' occurs, and was particularly common with part (d) questions, where more than one point of view is required to gain the higher marks.

Section 1

Most candidates now recognise that in order to earn maximum marks on the part (a) questions it is recommended that they should learn the Edexcel glossary definitions (this applies not just to this section but throughout the paper). Candidates who had learnt them performed to a high standard, while those who had not, did not tend to score well on these questions. Question 1(b) was generally well answered although some candidates did not develop their answers and make reference to 'liberation from samsara' and 'becoming one with Brahman'. As with many other part (c) questions many candidates who answered Question 1(c) did not gain marks because they did not respond to the word 'why' in the question.

Question 2(b) was very well answered. Question 2(c) showed a distinct split between those who did not respond to the word 'why' in the question and simply described karma and those who explained 'why' karma is important. Question 2(d) some candidates attempted to answer this question but with no idea of the meaning of sanatan dharma.

For both questions 1(d) and 2(d) it is important for candidates to be aware that, whilst the question requires them to give their own opinion, it also requires them to explain why people may hold an alternative opinion.

Section 2

Question 3(b) was very well answered and showed that candidates know the difference between smriti and shruti texts. In previous years candidates had confused the two. In response to Question 3(c) many candidates gave descriptions of the jati system but made no attempt to explain 'why' its important.

In Question 4(b) many candidates explained the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita in detail but there were no clear links to karma. Question 4(c) was answered very effectively by those candidates who addressed the need to explain 'why'. For Question 4(d) some candidates responses seen were one sided.

Section 3

Question 5 was much more popular than Question 6, possibly because Question 5(c) yatra (pilgrimage) is easier for some candidates to explain than Question 6(c) symbols in worship.

Question 5(b) and 5(c) produced some excellent answers. Those candidates that attempted to answer Question 6 tended to score low marks on Question 6(c). Even many able candidates were unable to go beyond level 2 because they only provided a descriptive response.

Section 4

Many more candidates chose to answer Question 8 than Question 7 possibly because part (c) asked about the sacred thread ceremony and part (c) asked about jnana yoga.

Question 7(b) ranged from developed to simple descriptions of what happens at a naming ceremony. On Question 7(c) the majority of candidates who answered this question were unaware of, or confused about jnana yoga. Again many able candidates unable to move beyond level 2 because they confined themselves to description.

Question 8(b) was frequently very well answered but did show that there is some confusion in some candidate's minds about the different stages in life. Question 8(c) was answered effectively by those candidates who address the need to explain 'why' rather than descriptive answers.

Section 5

Question 9 was much more popular than Question 10.

More able candidates tended to opt for Question 9 and this elicited many very high scoring responses showing that candidate had been well prepared for this section. Question 9(a) was usually well answered with the majority of candidates aware of architectural features of a temple. Question 9(b) was answered in a variety of ways, and these were rewarded as 'alternative approaches' when they diverged from the answers which the mark scheme anticipated. Question 9(c) candidates were able to give a variety of reasons for the two sides of the question.

Question 10, produced a wide range of answers. For Question 10(a) most candidates mentioned ahimsa but did not make reference to animals or give any other ways. Question 10(b) was a familiar question from past papers, but again showed that most candidates have limited knowledge of non-Hindu groups and therefore some are unable to answer this question effectively. There were some lengthy answers about M K Gandhi, but this did not answer the question about 'non-Hindu' and did not get beyond level 1. In Question 10(c) some candidates produced good answers; however others frequently gave one sided responses.

Unit N (5587/5588)

Sikhsim

Unit N continues to attract a large number of entries from pupils not of a Sikh background. While students had clearly studied the Glossary and secured good marks on part (a) questions, the part (d) questions could be better answered. Candidates should be encouraged to attempt the part (d) questions and provide reasons for supporting and reasons for opposing the statement in separate paragraphs. Moreover, it may be useful for candidates to consider which Section they are answering as this will help them select relevant material.

Section 1

This section was generally well answered, though many candidates found Question 1(c) difficult and provided examples of equal treatment of women and men rather than the reasons for it. In Question 2(c) many candidates tried to develop one particular reason for the rejection of the Vedas and Qur'an. Candidates could have drawn on the teachings linked to the journeys of Guru Nanak.

Section 2

Question 4 was more popular than Question 3, perhaps because it focussed on Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. However, while the answers to Question 4(c) demonstrated knowledge about Guru Nanak, understanding about how his practices determined the Sikh tradition remained implicit.

Section 3

Some candidates confused Vaisakhi with Diwali. This not only impacted Question 5(c) but also Question 6(c) and 6(d). It is vital that they are clear about the importance of the events that took place on the Vaisakhi of 1699 as well as being able to describe the sequence of events. Some candidates misinterpreted Question 6(b) to discuss gurdwara architecture rather than public worship.

Section 4

Question 7(b) elicited some disorganised responses suggesting that it is not taught as a discrete topic. Private devotion should be taught as discretely as public devotion. There were useful illustrations to some answers to Question 7(c) explaining the symbolism of the Nishan Sahib. Very solid knowledge was demonstrated on the importance of the Rahit Maryada, but candidates could improve their understanding of the main subject headings of its contents.

Section 5

Question 9 was far more popular than question 10, which was only attempted by a small minority of candidates. However, when attempted it was usually answered well. Question 9(b) was usually answered well, although answers to Question 9(c) the same issues in technique were seen as in the part (d) questions elsewhere. Some candidates tried to interpret Question 9(a) as a question on public worship.

Unit O (5589/5590)

Buddhism

Section 1

This section had a mix of answers. Question 2 was much more popular than Question 1 with over two thirds of the candidates choosing to answer this question.

For Question 1(b) candidates generally answered the question about anicca instead of anatta. However, there were some very high quality answers that referred to the khandas and the chariot analogy. In part (c) while most candidates were able to provide a description of nibbana, a number were unable to go on to explain its importance for Buddhists except very briefly. Responses to part (d) were in general argued well but some tended to be one sided and mainly focused on the Buddhist idea of rebirth to rebut the argument. Higher level answers were able to look at non-Buddhist arguments to support their agreement. Candidates should be reminded that they need to ensure that both sides of the argument is considered in their response.

Question 2(b) was answered well on the whole with the Four Noble Truths being outlined in detail. For part (c), although less so than in Question 1(c), some candidates only explained what kamma was without going on to explain its importance. However, a number of candidates were able to explain its importance in great detail. In these particular questions candidates should make sure they address the "importance" part of the question. For part (d) responses tended to focus on the first part of the statement about nothing being permanent. There were some excellent answers that covered all of the statement and examined arguments for and against from a purely Buddhist perspective.

Section 2

This section produced some excellent answers but conversely also indicated some aspects of the specification were not well known. There was a comparable number of responses to both questions.

Question 3(b) was answered well by many candidates. A number of candidates either explained what the sangha was or how it functioned. Part (c) produced very few higher level answers. Candidates tended to not know what tantra was and either focused on a definition of Tibetan Buddhism or missed the question out. Part (d) was generally answered very well with balanced answers.

Question 4(b) produced some excellent answers, but a high proportion of candidates outlined what the Tipitaka was. Candidates need ensure that they read the question carefully to understand what is being asked of them. For part (c) candidates tended to not know what Arahants were and either focused on a definition of Theravada Buddhism or missed the question out. This highlights the importance of candidates preparing to answer all the different aspects of the specification rather than just the majority. Part (d) was answered generally very well with candidates exploring the relationship between the ordained and lay Buddhists.

Section 3

Candidates seem to enjoy this section in examining worship and celebration; the answers tended to be a lot more concrete and written with a higher degree of confidence. There was a comparable number of responses to both questions.

Question 5(b) was answered well on the whole, however, a significant minority mistook Wesak for Vassa and as such could only get marks where the activities crossed over. Some candidates also spent time on this question explaining "why" the festival is celebrated, which was not what the question asked for. Part (c) was answered well by the majority of candidates. It tended to not just be a description of mantras (as previous part (c) questions had indicated was a possibility). Part (d) was answered well either from a purely Buddhist perspective, or also from those candidates who used their personal responses (including non-Buddhist) as a supporting argument.

For Question 6(a) while most candidates identified samatha as a type of meditation they were unable to go any further and as a result could only gain 1 mark. Part 6(b) was very well answered, and most candidates were able to identify how offerings are used in worship. Question 6(c), in a similar way to Question 5(c), was answered well by the majority of candidates. The importance was highlighted rather than just focusing on description. Part (d) was generally well answered, candidates were able to give responses which discussed two opinions but the contrary point of view tended to be limited and hence was weaker than the supporting arguments. To get level 4 candidates need to give two different points of view with more than one supporting reason for each.

Section 4

Candidates answered most of the questions in this section well, although there were one or two exceptions where some questions required some candidates to think through a question before answering it at first glance. Questions 7 or 8 were equally popular with candidates.

In Question 7(b) most candidates were able to outline at least three things that happen at the ordination of bhikkus and bhikkunis. For part (c) most candidates were able to identify the Three Refuges, but a number of candidates did not go on to explain their importance to Buddhists. It was possible to answer the question referring to the Refuges as a whole or to individual ones. Those candidates who answered them separately found the reasons they described for their importance tended to be the same (helped them progress towards enlightenment) and this could only be credited once. For part (d) most candidates answered with reference to Right Speech, but many did not go beyond a one sided treatment of the statement and so were not able to gain higher marks.

Question 8(b) was well answered by many candidates with many listing three of the five pansils. However, care should be taken in differentiating between the five pansils and the additional five pansils which a significant minority of candidates referred to. For part (c) most candidates were able to describe Buddhist teachings on karuna but the majority did not then go on to explain its importance to Buddhists. Part (d) was answered well in the majority of cases with candidates finding it straightforward to balance Buddhist teachings with more secular "rights" for all people.

Section 5

Many candidates find that due to time limitations they do not complete the examination and this means that some outstanding candidates did not do well on this section. Candidates should not write too much in the previous sections and allow sufficient time (30 minutes is recommended) for this last section. Marks are also awarded in this section for quality of written communication (QWC). So candidates should be reminded not use bullet points or abbreviations, and to use good spelling, punctuation and paragraphs in this section.

Question 10 was very slightly more popular than Question 9 this year, in common with last year. Question 9(a) was usually well answered with the majority of candidates able to identify functions of the vihara in the local area. For part (b) candidates were able to identify features of a vihara and generally explained how they reflected Buddhist belief. Consequently this question was usually answered well. Part (c) was well answered and candidates were able to give reasons for the two sides of the stimulus question. On a number of occasions, however, candidates only focused on one side of the argument.

For Question 10(a) candidates tended to answer the question 'what jobs can a Buddhist do?' and therefore missed the focus of the question which was the values. Most candidates were able to identify Right Livelihood but in general did not go beyond this. The higher level answers drew values from a range of places such as karuna. Part (b) was well answered when candidates did not focus just on the jobs a Buddhist could do. A large number of candidates linked this question with part (a) and wrote about how hard it would be to find and hold down a job in today's society. Part (c) obviously appealed to many of the candidates and they produced good and well reasoned responses referring to various jobs that were necessary to society but that a Buddhist could not do. Some candidates identified that Buddhists could not handle money which actually only applies to ordained Buddhists, candidates need to be careful to be specific. However, some answers were one sided which meant they could not access the higher levels.

Unit P (5591/5592)

Mark's Gospel

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. Centres are reminded that as this is a study of Mark's Gospel, non-Markan material is not credited. There are still many candidates who in the part (c) questions just give a description without showing any understanding. In the part (d) questions, some candidates do not refer to Mark's Gospel in their answer. Where this is the case, candidates will receive a maximum of level 2 (2 marks).

Section 1

Question 1(a) was very well-known. Question 2(a) was generally well known but some candidates found it difficult when in trying to explain the meaning. In Question 1(b) the majority of candidates knew this incident and managed to produce at least 2 correct features, however there was a significant number of candidates who thought it was referring to the women coming to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. For part (b) of Question 2 many candidate did know the story, but a significant number got it muddled up with the story of Legion. Question 1(c) was better answered than 2(c), and many candidates were able to identify a number of relevant features, but in 2(c) many candidates did not draw out the nature of discipleship from the specific incident referred to in the question. Both Question 1(d) and 2(d) produced some well thought out answers.

Section 2

For Question 3(a) 'Corban' was much better known this year than it has been previously, and Question 4(a) was also generally well known, although a number of candidates were relating it to non-Christian religions. In 3(b) most candidates were able to gain marks on this question. However, in Question 4(b) many candidate listed some of the Ten Commandments. There were some good answers produced for Question 3(c), but for 4(c) candidates were able to say what the predictions were, but not able to say why they were important. There were some thoughtful answers produced to the two evaluation questions.

Section 3

Both part (a) questions were generally well answered. Questions 5 and 6 (b) generally produced good answers, picking out the main features of both incidents. Question 5(c) was also generally well answered with several valid reasons being given for the death of Jesus. Question 6(c) was not as well answered although there were some good explanations about the problem. However, some candidates simply stated that the problem was that there are two different endings without giving much further explanation. Questions 5(d) and 6(d) produced some good answers, although there was a notable number of candidates who decided to answer 6(d) even though they had answered 5(a), (b) and (c) for the rest of the question. Candidates need to be reminded that they should answer all the parts from one question. If they select some parts of one question and some parts of another question they commit a rubric infringement and not all their answers can be credited.

Section 4

The part (a) questions were generally well known. Questions 7 and 8(b) were generally well answered with many candidates getting full marks on these questions. Question 7(c) showed some candidates did not understand the idea of the Son of God at the time of Jesus and often muddled Son of God and Son of Man. Whilst in Question 8(c) there were some good answers, many candidates struggled to explain what the miracle showed about the nature of Jesus. Some thoughtful answers were given to both part (d) questions.

Section 5

In response to Question 9(a) some candidates struggled with this question although there were few excellent answers. However, most candidates had no suggestions about the views about the Kingdom of God that were held by people at the time of Jesus. For Question 10(a) candidates often outlined the life of their chosen Christian, but often did not show how they faced up to persecution. Question 9(b) was generally not well answered with candidates finding it difficult to show the importance of the Kingdom in the parables, preferring to just re-tell some of the parables. Responses to Question 10(b) often did not refer to what is actually to be found in the text. Both part (c) questions produced some thoughtful answers, although many candidates answering Question 10(c) spent a lot of time arguing that persecution shouldn't be allowed which did not really address the question set.

Statistics

Unit H - Religion and society based on a study of Christianity and at least one other religion 5575

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	88	75	62	50	41	33	25	17
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5576

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	104	91	78	65	54	43	32	21
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper	80	68	59	50	41	34	27	21	15
Raw mark boundary for coursework 02	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

Unit I - Christianity

5577

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	88	74	60	47	38	29	20	11
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5578

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	101	87	73	59	48	37	26	15
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper	80	66	56	46	36	29	22	16	10
Raw mark boundary for coursework 02	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

Unit J - Catholic Christianity

5579

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	88	74	60	47	38	29	20	11
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5580

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	101	87	73	59	48	37	26	15
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper	80	66	56	46	36	29	22	16	10
Raw mark boundary for coursework 02	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

Unit K - Islam
5581

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	90	77	64	52	44	36	28	20
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5582

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	107	93	79	66	56	46	36	26
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper	80	71	61	51	42	36	30	24	18
Raw mark boundary for coursework 02	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

Unit L - Judaism
5583

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	90	77	64	52	44	36	28	20
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5584

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	107	93	79	66	56	46	36	26
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper	80	71	61	51	42	36	30	24	18
Raw mark boundary for coursework 02	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

Unit M - Hinduism
5585

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	90	77	64	52	44	36	28	20
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5586

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	107	93	79	66	56	46	36	26
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper	80	71	61	51	42	36	30	24	18
Raw mark boundary for coursework 02	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

Unit N - Sikhism
5587

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	90	77	64	52	44	36	28	20
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5588

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	107	93	79	66	56	46	36	26
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper	80	71	61	51	42	36	30	24	18
Raw mark boundary for coursework 02	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

Unit O - Buddhism
5589

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	90	77	64	52	44	36	28	20
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5590

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	107	93	79	66	56	46	36	26
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper	80	71	61	51	42	36	30	24	18
Raw mark boundary for coursework 02	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

Unit P - Mark's Gospel
5591

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	87	75	63	51	42	33	24	15
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

5592

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	105	92	79	67	55	43	32	21
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper	80	69	60	51	43	35	28	21	14
Raw mark boundary for coursework 02	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, i.e. 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, i.e. 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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