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Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies B (3RB0)
Paper 1E Hinduism

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Short Course 3RBO 1E
Religious Studies B (Short Course)
Paper 1: Area of Study 1 - Religion and Ethics – Hinduism

This was the first examination series for the revised GCSE 9 - 1 Level 1 and 2 qualification in Religious Studies. Whilst the new specification shares some common feature with the legacy specification, the new qualification is markedly different, both in format and the range of skills and knowledge that it has been designed to test.

Overview:

- **a** type questions require that the candidate give three pieces of information in response to the question. It is important that the candidate not simply give a list of items, but that each piece of information conveyed is presented either in its own sentence, or at least in its own clause within a sentence.
- **b** type questions typically require that the candidate should be able to present two pieces of information; typically two reasons for something, two attitudes to something, two ways for something. To gain full marks on this question, the candidate should aim to develop each of those reasons, attitudes or ways. This can be done by adding additional relevant information, by giving an example or by citing a religious source.
- **c** type questions are answered similarly to **b** questions, except that here the candidate has the potential to gain an additional development mark from the use of a source of wisdom and authority that is relevant both to the question asked and to the point that they are making. The use of a source of wisdom and authority on its own does not automatically gain the additional mark but is a means for the candidate to gain a further mark where they have already given a developed response. On the basis (outlined above for **b** questions) that a source of wisdom and authority can be used as a means of developing a response, candidates can use two, relevant, sources of wisdom and authority in a **c** question to access the third mark for that particular explanation, reason etc.
- **d** type questions represent the single biggest change between the legacy specification and the new. On the one hand they present as similar to the old specification's d question (an invitation to present reasons for and against, while giving a conclusion), but on the other hand the introduction of appraisal into the mark scheme means that we are really looking for the candidate to evaluate the various merits of the arguments for and against and not simply present them.

Overall, the most successful candidates tended to understand key terminology - and whilst 'keywords' are not assessed on this paper, it became apparent that some candidates had benefited from being taught them. Successful candidates were able to develop their responses, however simply, and were able successfully to deploy a range of sources of wisdom and authority to support and develop their responses. In **d** answers, the most successful candidates considered the various merits of the arguments they were presenting by, for example, appraising the relative authority of different sacred texts or the comparative validity of secular or scientific arguments in an integrated manner. In future examination series, this latter capacity would seem likely to be key to accessing the highest grades.

3RBO_1E_Q1a

The question asked was:
"Outline **three** beliefs about Shiva."

A number of candidates gave responses about shaivites that did not answer the questions set.

3RBO_1E_Q1b

The question asked was:
"Explain **two** reasons why the tri-guna are important for Hindus."

Many candidates unfortunately gave responses about the trimurti.

3RBO_1E_Q1c

The question asked was:
"Explain **two** reasons why artha is important for Hindus today.
In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority."

Many candidates confused *artha* with *arti* and consequently gained no marks for this question.

3RBO_1E_Q1d

The question asked was:
"‘If a person suffers, it is their own fault.’
Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.
In your response you should:

- refer to Hindu teachings
- reach a justified conclusion."

Whilst there were many good responses to this question, a significant number of candidates failed to understand the question's intention and responded as though the question was about whether people ought to suffer, or even how others should respond in the face of that suffering, and subsequently failed to get as many marks as they could have done since at least part of their response was thereby irrelevant.

3RBO_1E_Q2a

The question asked was:

“Outline **three** Hindu beliefs about the family.”

Answers to this question were, for the most part, tightly focused on Hindu beliefs about the family, however there were many good responses that simply gave explanations of different family types. Many posited the nuclear family as the archetypal Hindu family, perhaps on the grounds that for them it represents the traditional family construct of one where the parents have not been divorced and remarried - such responses typically failed to engage with the traditional importance of the extended family.

3RBO_1E_Q2b

The question asked was:

“Explain **two** Hindu attitudes to homosexuality.”

Few candidates failed to score at least two marks on this question and there were many good, quite sophisticated answers.

3RBO_1E_Q2c

The question asked was:

“Explain **two** Hindu teachings about the roles of men and women in the family.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.”

This question was almost universally well answered, in terms of candidates being able to provide two teachings and be able to develop at least one. What proved more challenging for some was to provide a relevant source of wisdom and authority to develop one part of their response. It may be that candidates, in their revision, would benefit from not only asking themselves what Hindus believe about a particular thing, but why, which source of wisdom and authority underpins the belief.

3RBO_1E_Q2d

The question asked was:

“‘Hindus should not get divorced.’

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

The best candidates were able to articulate Hindu responses both for and against the statement given. Less confident candidates tended to default to responses that would have been equally at home in a general, secular, discussion of reasons for and against divorce. Candidates are reminded that, where the question explicitly calls for reference to Hindu teachings and does not call for non-religious reasons, only those non-religious reasons that might legitimately be held by Hindus will be credited.

Summary:

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Any technical vocabulary used in the question paper will also be in the Specification. Check your understanding of this vocabulary, especially where there are similar looking words with different meanings (arti and artha, karma and kama).
- Allow yourself enough time to both read and understand the questions. Make sure that you explain things that require explaining and that you are in fact answering the question that has been set.
- The Specification gives some key texts for each section of the exam. Take time to learn some of these. When you use the quote in your exam, make sure that it is 'doing something' in your answer and not just dropped in as an afterthought. The quote will gain marks only if it is developing one of the points you've made.
- Read the bulletpoints in part **d** questions carefully and make sure that you cover them - if you are asked to provide non-religious reasons, make sure you do. If non-religious reasons are not asked for, you can save time in the exam by not giving them. Remember that reasons from another religion are not *non-religious* and will not be considered as such.
- **d** questions require you to say how effective or 'strong' the elements of the argument you are giving are - but do not limit yourself to saying that x is stronger than y, tell the examiner why x is stronger than y. Is it supported by a more authoritative text for example?