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Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies B (3RB0)
Paper 2D Study of Buddhism

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies.
Religious Studies B Short Course Paper 2: Area of Study 1 – Study of Religion
Option 2D – Buddhism

The paper contributes to 50% of the overall qualification. The assessment consists of two questions; candidates must answer both 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.

3RB0_2D_Q1a

The question asked was:
'Outline **three** ways in which nibbana is important for Buddhists.'

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. Some candidates performed less well as they supplied responses detailing ways Buddhist could **reach** nibbana, which is, of course, a different question. Some candidates answered using a list which is not an outline and thus could only receive 1 mark according to the mark scheme. A list – usually one or two words per belief - can reach a maximum of one mark, as this is not outline.

Generic information about lists/sentences

Using this example:

Outline 3 beliefs about nibbana:

- Escape samsara, become enlightened, escape dukkha (1 mark for list).
- It provides an escape from samsara (1 mark for a sentence identifying one correct piece of information).
- Suffering, happy, delighted (0 marks as all three parts of a list have to be correct to gain the mark).

Examiner Tips:

- Centres should encourage candidates to write in full sentences in order to ensure that their response is an outline and not a list.
- Centres need to encourage candidates to be sure they are clear about the different 'numerical' teachings within Buddhism - for example, the difference between the content of the Five Precepts and the Five Khandas. Failure to do so, or confusion - as in this question between the Three Marks of Existence and the Three Refuges - can mean the loss of marks.
- It is good idea to separate each outline by starting a new line for each one.

3RB0_2D_Q1b

The question asked was:
'Explain **two** reasons why samadhi is important for Buddhists.'

Unfortunately, many candidates confused this with samudhaya and so gave responses Noble based upon the Four Truths. These were unable to be credited. Candidates who performed less well on this question were either

unable to develop answers or were unsure of the meaning of samadhi. It is important that centres teach both the original term and the translation as questions can include either of them, when both are given in the specification, and develop ways to help candidates distinguish between them. Furthermore, the question was about how samadhi is important to Buddhists. Answers which were simply a description samadhi were not credited.

Examiner Tips:

- Centres should encourage candidates to make sure that, in a developed response, both parts of their answer are able, to stand on their own. One way to check this is to see if both parts of the reason – the statement and development – both make sense when read on their own. If they do the reason is likely to be developed.
- Centres need to make sure candidates realise rewording a reason does not count as development.
- Centres should encourage candidates not to rely on transferring material from other sections of the same question in order to try to gain marks.
- Candidates need to accurately understand both the original term and its English translation.

3RB0_2D_Q1c

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** reasons why it is important for Buddhists to follow the five precepts.

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

This question was well answered by many candidates but a minority described the Precepts. This was, unfortunately, not creditable.

Whilst many candidates were able to provide a source of wisdom for this question, some merely added it at the end, almost as a footnote or afterthought. The source of wisdom not only needs to be relevant, but also needs to be integrated into the body of the response/one of the reasons.

Examiner Tips:

- Centres should be certain that the source of wisdom is genuine.
- Two sources of wisdom will not gain two marks as the question paper specifically states 'a source' of wisdom.
- Separating the two reasons into two paragraphs not only makes it easier to distinguish those reasons but can also help clarify the thinking of the candidate.
- Centres need to encourage candidates to pay attention to the wording of the question and respond accurately to 'reasons'/'ways'/'teachings' rather than, as happened with a minority of candidates, simply giving a description of the Five Precepts.

3RB0_2D_Q1d

The question asked was:

“The Wheel of Life helps Buddhists understand causes of suffering.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

Many candidates described the Wheel of Life rather than linking it directly to the question. Others provided ‘for and against’ for the quotation and then provided a personal opinion. This does not constitute appraisal and therefore limited the marks available.

In (d) questions, candidates must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. Candidates will also be required to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding as well as accuracy of religion and belief when responding to the question and in meeting AO2 descriptors. Simply providing a for and against set of reasons and a personal conclusion does not begin to appraise the statement, and centres need to encourage candidates to write in a well formulated and discursive style.

This question also has 3 marks for SPaG. To gain these marks the candidate needs to:

- spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy.
- use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall.
- use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate.

Examiner Tip:

Centres should encourage candidates to go beyond for and against arguments with a conclusion as this is likely to limit them to Level 2 marks.

3RB0_2D_Q2a

The question asked was:

‘Outline **three** Buddhist aims for the use of punishment.’

Some candidates listed types of punishment - without linking these to the aims no mark could be given.

Examiner Tips:

- It is important for centres to stress the importance of the wording of the question. Candidates should be encouraged to highlight the key words to keep the demands of the question in focus.
- It is important that centres encourage candidates to pay close attention to the wording of the questions.
- Writing in sentences, even if using bullet points, can help to guarantee that the result is an outline rather than a list.

3RB0_2D_Q2b

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** reasons why forgiveness is important in Buddhism.'

This question was well answered by the majority of candidates.

Examiner Tip:

- In a question that asks for two ways, give two ways (not three) as the third way will not be credited.
- Whilst some candidates directly quoted Buddhist teachings to develop their answer, paraphrases would be equally acceptable as long as relevant and recognisable.

3RB0_2D_Q2c

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** Buddhist teachings about suffering.

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

Descriptions of suffering were not able to be credited unless they were integrated into the reasons given for its existence.

Examiner Tips:

- If in doubt about suitable sources of wisdom, use a search engine to find specific Buddhist teachings.
- For accurate Buddhist teachings there are many excellent Buddhist centres which have informative and accurate teachings available online.
- Paraphrases of sources of wisdom are acceptable as long as they are accurate, relate to the question, and are from genuine Buddhist teachings. Accurate references - i.e. chapter/verse - are not necessary as long as the reference is generally stated.

3RB0_1D_Q2d

The question asked was:

"No-one should support the use of capital punishment."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Buddhist teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.'

As stated for Q1(d), responses in (d) questions must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. Candidates will be required to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding as well as accuracy of religion and belief when responding to the question and in meeting AO2 descriptors.

If not all bullet points for (d) questions are addressed, the response can only reach the top of Level 2.

SPaG is not assessed in Q2(d).

Examiner Tip:

Centres need to encourage candidates to look carefully at the stimulus quotation. It will give a clear indication of what is being looked for. All the bullet points need to be addressed and so it is advisable that candidates cross through each bullet point as they address them.

Summary

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

- Do not attach extra sheets to your examination paper, write within the scannable pages using the blank spaces.
- When answering the (a) items use three full sentences.
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in (c) items must be relevant to the question and support the reason given. They do not have to be learnt by rote, but can be paraphrased. Accurate chapter and verse references are not needed.
- The (d) items ask for evaluation, after considering the evidence. The higher grades are achieved if the evidence/reasons given are 'considered' or appraised for their value as arguments as part of deciding the evaluation.
- On (d) items the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that can be awarded in the answer.
- Candidates should read the questions carefully, and answer the question asked fully.