



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies Short Course (3RB0)

Paper 1: Area of Study 1 – Religion and Ethics

Option 1E – Hinduism

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Introduction

This was the second examination series for the revised GCSE 9 - 1 Level 1 and 2 qualification in Religious Studies. It is clear that many centres have learned considerably from the preceding series and have begun to school their candidates in the technique required for success in this examination. The Principal Examiner's report for the full-course (1RB0_1E) (in particular questions 1 and 2) contains information and examples that may be of use to candidates preparing for 3RB0_1E.

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 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. The number of reasons/ways etc. is limited to 2 and so candidates are not able to access a third mark by giving a third reason/way.

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 or reason.

d type questions allow candidates to give reasons for and against a particular proposition, whilst coming to a justified conclusion. The response needs to show evidence of appraisal if it is to access the higher levels available, and this appraisal should not be superficial. Importantly, appraisal is not the only factor in accessing Levels 3 and 4, but one of several. An answer may show good appraisal, but be full of disparate, undeveloped, ideas that fail to make connections and so be a better fit for the lower levels of the mark scheme.

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 which showed the capacity to link connected ideas. In future examination series, this latter capacity would seem likely to be key to accessing the highest grades.

3RB0_1E_Q1a

Successful answers to this question were comparatively rare, with many candidates choosing to leave the space blank. Centres could remind their candidates that the exam is marked positively and so it is always worth writing some kind of response for every question.

3RB0_1E_Q1b

The atman was widely known and almost all candidates were able to get at least some marks for this question.

3RB0_1E_Q1c

Where candidates understood the meaning of Cosmology, the question was generally well answered. For a considerable number of candidates however, the term represented an obstacle to them being able to access the question. It is important that, when delivering the course, centres highlight the words used in the specification as the phrasing of questions in the exam is often derived from it. It is easy to imagine being able to deliver the content behind this question, without really making much use of the word *cosmology* at all.

3RB0_1E_Q1d

This question presented a number of challenges to candidates. It was important that they kept focused on the question itself, which was about using a murti to *learn* about the divine - not an invitation to a general discussion about murtis. Secondly, the question was not an invitation to discuss the trimurti. Many candidates who did one or other of these things were still able to access marks where they were still making points that were relevant to the question, as set, but for some this prevented them accessing the best marks.

3RB0_1E_Q2a

Many candidates were able to answer this question successfully; those who were not, tended not to have focused on the *purpose* of marriage. As with 'the nature of' in 1a, it is important that candidates are supported in being able to interpret and understand the words used in the Specification.

3RB0_1E_Q2b

This question proved to be very accessible for the vast majority of candidates. Because of its open nature, a wide variety of responses was both given and credited, but we looked for candidates to be telling us what the community (in its wider sense) does for the family - whereas some candidates ended up telling us what the extended family does for others within that extended family.

3RB0_1E_Q2c

2c proved to be something of a challenge for many candidates who did not equate family planning with limiting the number of off-spring. Here too, I cannot stress highly enough the importance of familiarising candidates with the language of the specification where other terms might more commonly be used in the classroom. Interestingly, the sources of wisdom and authority quoted in this question were seldom as given in the specification, but this can only disadvantage the candidate if the quote is neither known to the examiner nor readily found in standard reference sources.

3RB0_1E_Q2d

Whilst many candidates were able to produce good responses to this question, often referencing the ashramas. Nevertheless, there was a significant number of candidates who answered the question as though it were about creation, rather than procreation.

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). It would also seem to be a worthwhile exercise to make sure that you understand some of the technical terms in the Specification that are not subject specific for example, is the difference between 'three beliefs about the nature of Brahman' and 'three beliefs about Brahman'?
- 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. If you don't address the specific question asked, you will lose valuable time in the exam, writing an answer that can only access some of the marks.
- 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 bullet points 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 yourself 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 a strong argument; tell the examiner why x is stronger than y. Is it supported by a more authoritative text for example? The mark scheme talks about 'superficial appraisal' so try to go beyond the superficial. Answers where every paragraph ends either 'This is a strong argument because it is supported by scripture' or 'This is a weak argument because it is just an opinion' are always going to seem a little superficial.