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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A (1RB0)
Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Religion, Philosophy
and Social Justice
Option 3D: Buddhism

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Religious Studies B Paper 1D: Area of Study 3 – Religion, Philosophy and Social Justice (Paper code: 1RB0/3D)

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 Buddhism as a lived religion in the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are four sections:

- Buddhist Beliefs
- Philosophy of Religion
- Living the Buddhist Life
- Equality

Candidates had studied Buddhism 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: Buddhist Beliefs. This section was one of the two candidates had Advanced Information for and so had been informed which bullet points would be in the examination.

Bullet point 1.3 First Noble Truth including reference to the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: **the nature of dukkha**; Buddhist teachings about suffering; the different types of suffering as pain, fabrication and change; the importance of suffering for Buddhists today (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: 'Outline three Buddhist beliefs about dukkha.'

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

Most candidates were awarded 3 marks. Weaker candidates often repeated points using a different pattern of words rather than offering three separate points.

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. Candidates who answer using a list, which is not an outline, can only receive 1 mark

according to the mark scheme. If any one element of a list were incorrect it would get 0 marks.

Candidates should be encouraged to be familiar with the requirements of the different styles of questions in order to make efficient use of their time in the exam.

Question 1(b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Buddhist Beliefs. This section was one of the two candidates had Advanced Information for and so had been informed which bullet points would be in the examination.

Bullet point 1.7 Human life: divergent Buddhist understandings of the nature and importance of The Five Khandas (aggregates), including the Khandha Sutta; divergent **Buddhist understandings of the nature and importance of sunnata**, tathagatagarbha, Buddha-nature; divergent Buddhist understandings of the nature and importance of Arahant and Bodhisattva Ideals; divergent Buddhist understandings of the nature and history of Buddhahood and the Pure Land (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: 'Explain two reasons why sunnata is important to Buddhists.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two beliefs are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 4 marks.

Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, quotes or examples. The development must be of the belief given and to the question asked.

Some candidates were able to correctly identify information about the importance of sunnata, although some struggled to articulate more than one reason. Many candidates (two thirds) were unfamiliar with the term sunnata, leading to a loss of marks.

Examiner advice: Centres are advised to ensure candidates are able to recognise subject specific vocabulary so that students are not confused if subject specific terms are used in questions.

Question 1(c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Buddhist Beliefs. This section was one of the two candidates had Advanced Information for and so had been informed which bullet points would be in the examination.

Bullet point 1.4 **Second Noble Truth: the nature of samudaya** – the causes of suffering, including reference to Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, the Three Poisons; Buddhist teachings about the causes of suffering – Sermon at Benares, and how they are

represented in the Wheel of Life; divergent understandings of the Wheel of Life, with reference to Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: 'Explain two reasons why the Second Noble Truth is important to Buddhists.'

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, 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. The source of wisdom can be given as a recognisable paraphrase
- If examiners are unsure they will use a search engine. Enter the gist of the paraphrase and the source
- If the source is attributed to the wrong person/source/ numerical reference it cannot be credited e.g. a Dali Lama quote attributed to the Buddha and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded
- Numerical or generic references on their own are not awarded. The candidate must use the reference correctly ie not just state the name of a sutta.

Some candidates were able to show knowledge and understanding of the Second Noble Truth, although many were not. However, most candidates did not try to access the mark for a source of wisdom and authority.

Question 1(d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the d) items.

The candidates are being assessed on AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

AO2 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 validity of the arguments used / appraisal to gain the higher grades. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting student's progression to the higher

levels. Many candidates used words that implied appraisal, such as strong/weak argument, but were unable to follow this up with genuine evaluation.

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: Buddhist Beliefs. This section was one of the two candidates had Advanced Information for and so had been informed which bullet points would be in the examination.

Bullet point 1.1 The life of the Buddha: the nature and history of the **events in the life of the Buddha and why they are important to Buddhists today**; including ancestry, birth, princely life, marriage, the Four Sights, including Buddhavamsa XXVI, the enlightenment of the Buddha and founding of the Sangha (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was (d) "The most important event in the life of the Buddha is his enlightenment."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Buddhist teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

d) items are marked using levels and awarding is carried out using 'best fit' according to the level descriptors.

In response to this question candidates who did well were able to discuss details of the Buddha's enlightenment in comparison to other aspects of his life. Very few candidates were able to expand answers with appraisal, finding it difficult to access level 3 of the mark scheme.

Question 2(a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Philosophy of Religion

Bullet point 2.2 **Buddhist teachings about the Realm of Gods:** Buddhist understanding of the devas and differences between a personal God and the devas, including the Śūraṅgama Sūtra Section 9 Chapter 11; the nature and symbolism of the Wheel of Life; the divergent attitudes toward the importance of the Wheel of Life for Buddhists today, including reference to Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was 'Outline three Buddhist teachings about the Realm of Gods.'

a) items are point marked – Outline requires three outlined points.

This question was accessible, with a little under three quarters of candidates achieving full marks. This was the question on the paper which achieved the strongest level of response.

Question 2(b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Philosophy of Religion

Bullet point 2.8 Religious upbringing: how a Buddhist upbringing provides a basis for an understanding of reality; **features of a Buddhist upbringing and why they may lead to belief**, including the Sigalovada Sutta; Buddhist responses to nonreligious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments about why a religious upbringing may result in a rejection of God's existence (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was 'Explain two reasons why a Buddhist upbringing may lead to belief.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two ways are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 4 marks.

Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, quotes or examples. The development must be of the way given and to the question asked.

In this question candidates were able to show knowledge and understanding about the significance of a Buddhist upbringing. Many candidates responded well, although some found it difficult to articulate more than one reason.

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: Philosophy of Religion

Bullet point 2.3 Enlightenment: **Buddhist teachings about the nature of enlightenment in Theravada and Mahayana traditions**; examples including that of the Buddha in Maha-Saccaka Sutta; reasons why enlightenment might be regarded as important; the importance of enlightenment for Buddhists today; Buddhist responses non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) which maintain that enlightenment is illogical and can be scientifically explained (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: 'Explain two Buddhist beliefs about the nature of enlightenment.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two teachings are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 4 marks. They must also correctly use a source of wisdom in their answer which must be identifiable, relevant and linked to the teaching given in the answer.

Candidates were able to show knowledge and understanding about the nature of enlightenment. Some candidates responded well, but many gave very general answers. There were few attempts to include sources of wisdom and authority.

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: Philosophy of Religion

Bullet point 2.6 Visions: Buddhist teachings about the nature and importance of visions with reference to the Vajra Sutta and vision of Maitreya by Asanga and the giving of the "Five Treatises of Maitreya"; Buddhist attitudes towards visions as emptiness/ illusions/ dreams as message dreams or as an indication of a person's mental health; **divergent Buddhist teachings on why visions might be important to Buddhists and why they might not be; Buddhist responses to non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) which maintain that visions are hallucinations and provide no spiritual benefit** (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was "Visions are not important."

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.

This question engaged candidates of all abilities and produced a range of marks. All candidates should be encouraged to answer every question because every mark is important. Candidates who did well were able to discuss the idea of visions with reference to Buddhism. Very few candidates were able to expand answers with appraisal, struggling to access level 3 of the mark scheme.

Examiner advice: Candidates should be encouraged to be familiar with the requirements of the different styles of questions in order to make efficient use of their time in the exam.

Question 3(a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Buddhist Life.

Bullet point 3.6*: Puja: The nature and purpose of puja in the vihara and the home, including reference to Mangala Sutta; examples of the different types; when each type might be used and why; **the importance of having different types of worship and their use in different Buddhist contexts** (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was 'Outline three reasons why having different types of worship might be important for Buddhists.'

This question was useful in differentiating between those candidates with a broad knowledge of Buddhist worship and those who were more limited in their understanding. The majority of candidates gained 2 marks on this question.

Question 3(b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Buddhist Life.

Bullet point 3.4: Features of Buddhist places of worship: the divergent nature, history and design of Buddhist places of worship, including temples, gompas, viharas, **shrines in Theravada, Mahayana and Triratna Buddhism**; how and why the places of worship are used, including reference to the shrine room, shrine facing east, and the library, showing the importance learning, including reference to the Kimsila Sutta (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was 'Explain two reasons why shrines may be important to Buddhists.'

Most candidates were able to access marks on this question, describing why shrines may be important to Buddhists. Some candidates described shrines, but stopped short of explaining their importance, thus gaining fewer marks.

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

Question 3(c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Buddhist Life.

Bullet point 3.1: Meditation: the nature, purpose and **significance of meditation in Buddhism**; the different types of meditation: samatha (concentration), metta bhavana (loving kindness) and vipassana (insight); meditative practices, including mindfulness breathing and zazen; divergent understanding of the nature and importance of

visualisation of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, including Amitāyus Meditation Sutra; how the different practices are used by Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists and the benefits from their use (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: 'Explain two reasons why meditation is significant for Buddhists.'

Candidates showed confidence in their response to this question and most were able to access marks on this question, describing why meditation may be significant to Buddhists. However, many candidates did not try to access the mark for a source of wisdom and authority, instead focusing on their reasons and developments.

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

Question 3(d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Buddhist Life.

Bullet point 3.5: **How and why objects of devotion are used within different Buddhist places of worship, buddharupas**, including reference to Vakkali Sutta, shrine, Bodhi tree; divergent understandings of why devotional objects are important in Buddhism today (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: "Buddharupas are an essential part of Buddhist worship."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Buddhist teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Candidates who did well were able to discuss the use of buddharupas in comparison to other aids to worship. A few candidates were able to expand answers with appraisal, enabling them to access level 3 of the mark scheme.

Examiner advice: Candidates who understand the diversity within the religious tradition, and the arguments for and against different practices are those best placed to evaluate.

Question 4(a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Equality.

Bullet point: 4.3 Buddhist attitudes towards religious freedom: different Buddhist teachings and responses to the nature and importance of religious freedom, including

Towards The True Kinship Of Faiths: How the World's Religions Can Come Together Chapter 9 by the XIV Dalai Lama; the divergent responses of Buddhists to a multi-faith society; **the benefits and challenges for Buddhists living in a multi-faith society**; Buddhist responses to non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) against aspects of religious freedom (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: 'Outline three ways a Buddhist may benefit from living in a multi-faith society.'

This question worked well as it highlighted if candidates understood the impact of living in a multi-faith society - the majority of candidates gained 2 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 4(b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Equality

Bullet point: 4.7 Buddhist attitudes to social justice: divergent Buddhist responses to and teachings about the nature of the distribution of wealth and opportunity in the UK and the world; Buddhist teaching about social justice, including Sikhasamuccaya 280–281, and the **different ways Buddhists work for social justice** and how these may link to situation ethics (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: 'Explain two ways Buddhists may work for social justice.'

In this question candidates were able to show knowledge and understanding of Buddhist responses to social justice. Many candidates gained 4 marks, although many found it difficult to articulate more than one way.

Examiner advice: Centres are advised to ensure candidates are able to recognise subject specific vocabulary so that students are not confused if subject specific terms are used in questions.

Question 4(c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Equality

Bullet point: 4.1 Buddhist teaching on human rights: Buddhist teachings and responses to the nature and purpose of human rights; **why Buddhists might support human rights as important** including reference to upekkha and the Declaration of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists: Towards A Buddhist Culture of Non-Violence and Human Rights (May 1998); divergent Buddhist responses to the need for and application of individual human rights, including the support offered by situation ethics; the problems human rights might cause for Buddhists; non-religious (including

atheist and Humanist) arguments about human rights and Buddhist responses to them (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: 'Explain two reasons why Buddhists may see human rights as important.'

In this question candidates were able to show knowledge and understanding of why human rights are important to Buddhists. Many candidates gained 4 marks, although many found it difficult to offer development for the reasons offered.

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 4(d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Equality

Bullet point: 4.6 Buddhist attitudes towards racial discrimination: Buddhist teachings about why it causes problems in society, including Dhammapada 129–140; **Buddhist responses to racial discrimination as shown in the life and teachings of the XIV Dalai Lama.** (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question*).

The question asked was: "All Buddhists must work to end racial discrimination."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Buddhist teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

d) questions are good discriminators of achievement in RS. Candidates who did well were able to discuss the issue of racial discrimination using real examples from world politics. Many candidates found it difficult to expand answers with appraisal, which prevented them from accessing level 3 of the mark scheme.

Key advice from the examiner

- Centres must teach to the specification, making sure candidates are prepared for all parts of the bullet points in preparation for the questions
- When tackling a) 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 Buddhism 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?