

GCSE

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Religious Studies A-G 5561-5574

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Examiners' Report

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## CHIEF EXAMINER REPORT 2005

Religious Studies has again increased its entry at GCSE level whilst maintaining the overall level of performance.

Section 5 in the examination continues to under-perform in all units. Centres are reminded that this section is worth 23 marks and therefore should be given special attention in teaching, in revision and in the examination. Centres are reminded that in both the examination and coursework, the Quality of Written Communication is assessed in Section 5 only. Quality 3 is awarded only to candidates who use a formal style of writing typified by the use of sentences and paragraphs and by not using bullet points or numbering.

Centres are reminded that the phrase "consider another point of view" in the evaluation questions means that candidates must not just state another point of view and give a reason for why people hold it, but also explain why they disagree with the other point of view. Some candidates are also failing to gain the top level in evaluation because they do not end with a personal conclusion.

Questions on different attitudes have continued to cause problems for some candidates. If a question refers to different attitudes, candidates must refer to at least two attitudes to gain top marks. If they only know one attitude, they should say 'some' rather than saying there is only one attitude. For example they should say "Many Christians are against divorce" rather than "Christians are against divorce". GCSE Religious Studies, as well as the National Framework for RE at key stage 3, expects candidates to be aware that there are different attitudes within a religion.



## PRINCIPAL MODERATOR'S REPORT - COURSEWORK

A group of experienced moderators helped the process considerably, being familiar with both the likely administrative difficulties, and the adjustment process. Sub sampling continues to work usefully. Increased on-line work was accepted by almost all moderators.

The titles give scope to candidates across the ability range, testing the different objectives at all levels of response. Very few centres devised and had approved their own titles, but their success suggested our prescribed titles might benefit from some review and refreshment.

Student performance appeared similar to previous years, just possibly with fewer at the very highest and lowest levels.

Whilst very many centres complied with the requirements, a number fail either in the procedures or in the assessment of candidates, some continuing to do so after our reports of last year.

Simple errors like incomplete samples cause much time wasting and irritation to moderators. Similarly deadlines not met cause extra work and delay.

Teacher assessment is very often accurate, and there appears less attempt by assessors to look a little over optimistically at their students work, raising a few extra marks here and there. However, there are centres where assessment is thoroughly unsatisfactory, and here specific guidance and training may be helpful.





## UNIT A - 5561 (100%), 5562 (80%)

Unit A continues to be the most popular of the sixteen units, no doubt because it is an interesting short course which fulfils all the requirements for key stage 4 statutory RE. The examination once again succeeded in producing the wide range of performance levels expected in an examination with mainly whole cohort entry. The advent of on-line marking necessitated minor changes to the exam paper format, but these do not appear to have had any adverse effects on candidate performance.

### Section 1

This section was generally well answered, though many candidates had problems with question 1c) on causation which was perhaps why question 2 was much more popular than question 1. However, candidates answering question 1 performed very well on the other parts. Several candidates treated question 2c) as an evaluation rather than an understanding question. Such candidates gave a brief response on why some people do not believe in God, then spent a lot of time and wasted effort on why they are wrong. Only the first part of their answer could receive marks. "God gives meaning and purpose to life" caused problems despite last year's report indicating that this is a part of the specification.

### Section 2

Although question 4 was much more popular than question 3, candidates tended to perform better on question 3. In both questions, the a) and d) parts were well answered, though some candidates ignored the word law in "the law on euthanasia should be changed" question. Many candidates found problems with the different attitudes in 3 b) and 4 b) despite last year's comment that different attitudes to an issue within a religion are a key part of the specification (as they are in key Stage 3 of the new National Framework for RE). However, in answering question 4 c) many candidates wrote about different attitudes to euthanasia when the question only asked about reasons against euthanasia in one religion.

### Section 3

This section was answered better than in previous years. However, many candidates found question 5c) difficult and simply described an upbringing in one religion rather than explaining how that religion helps in the upbringing of children. "Explain how" questions require candidates to link the two parts of the question. Previous reports have pointed out that sex outside marriage refers to both pre and extra-marital relationships, but many candidates only mentioned one of these. The question on different attitudes to divorce in Christianity was much better answered than in the past, indicating more focused teaching.

### Section 4

Social harmony continues to pose problems for candidates and once again produced the lowest levels of response. Despite previous comments about the roles of men and women and attitudes to other religions, these questions continued to pose problems. Several candidates answered question 7c) in terms of one attitude being that women should stay at home and look after their husband and children; with another attitude being that women can have a career. Answers must refer to religion to gain marks. Similarly, the answers to question 8 c) revealed that many candidates had no idea of

what “attitudes to other religions” means. Although the phrase is difficult, it is a clear part of the specification and should be learnable by the majority of candidates. Both questions were equally popular and some very interesting insights to “you can’t really believe in one religion unless you have studied others” were given by candidates who were clearly struggling elsewhere on the paper.

### Section 5

The questions were equally popular this year, but question 9 tended to produce a higher level of response than question 10, mainly because candidates had so few religious facts to use in their answers on Religion: Wealth and Poverty. This report commented last year that the specification says candidates can study either soap operas or the national daily press, therefore specific questions on soap operas have to give the option of answering on the national daily press. Many candidates chose the national daily press and simply wrote about an issue such as abortion or euthanasia rather than how it was dealt with and whether it was a good or bad way of dealing with the issue.

Several candidates in question 10 a) wrote about Oxfam rather than a religious agency. Most candidates answered question 10 b) in purely general terms such as “it would make Muslims look better if they helped poor people” rather than referring to Muslim teaching and principles. In question 10c), candidates often ignored the word ‘Christians’ and simply wrote about all rich people. Not only did they miss the whole point of the question, it meant that such candidates did not refer to specific Christian teachings and so could not score many marks.

## UNIT B - 5563 (100%), 5564 (80%)

Unit B is steadily increasing in popularity. The examination produced a wide range of performance levels as is to be expected in a unit that is taken in the majority of centres, by the whole cohort. The advent of on-line marking necessitated minor changes in the exam paper format, but these do not appear to have had any adverse effects on candidate performance.

### Section 1

This section was generally answered well, though many candidates had problems with question 1c) which was probably why question 2 was much more popular than question 1. Candidates were confident about the design argument and on regular occasions gave this or a mixture of the design and causation argument. However, candidates answering question 1 performed well in the other parts. Several candidates treated question 2c) as an evaluation rather than an understanding question. Such candidates gave a brief response on why some people do not believe in God, then spent a lot of time and wasted effort on why they are not wrong. The evaluation question 2 d) caused problems despite last year's report indicating that this is a part of the specification. Candidates seemed unaware that the evaluation questions require a personal opinion of the stimulus, saying why they agree, giving reasons, then saying what someone would say, who opposed your opinion and then conclude as to why you dismiss or disagree with this argument.

### Section 2

Question 4 was the more popular question, although performance over the two questions was equal. In both questions, a) and d) parts were well answered, though some candidates ignored the word "law" in "the law on euthanasia should be changed" question. In question 3 b) many candidates did not give more than a definition of the sanctity of life. They were less familiar with the bible passages and often used this question to give information about abortion or euthanasia. In question 3 c) candidates often answered this as a knowledge question opposed to an understanding question. Despite previous years comments in question 4 b) and c) candidates frequently gave vague Christian answers or confused denominations. Many candidates found problems with different attitudes despite last year's comment that different attitudes within a religion are a key part of the specification (as they are in key stage 3 of the new National Framework for RE).

### Section 3

This section was answered better than in previous years. However, many candidates found question 5c) difficult and simply described an upbringing in one religion rather than explaining how that religion helps in the upbringing of children. "Explain how" questions require candidates to link the two parts of the question. Candidates had problems with question 6b). Their answers in general were ill informed and simply some Christians think it is okay others think it is completely wrong. Previous reports have pointed out that candidates should refer to groupings of Christians, however candidates continued to use 'some' and 'other'. The question on different attitudes to divorce in Christianity was much better answered than in the past, indicating more focused teaching.

#### Section 4

Social harmony continues to pose problems for candidates and once again produced the lowest levels of response. In question 7 b) candidates give a biography of Christians who worked for racial harmony, highlighting what they achieved but did not identify specifically what they did to achieve it in answer to the question. Despite previous comments about the roles of men and women and attitudes to other religions, these questions continued to pose problems. The answers to question 8 c) revealed that many candidates had no idea of what "attitudes to other religions" means. In many cases this was misunderstood to mean why Christians have different attitudes to issues, e.g. abortion, than other religions rather than their attitude to other religions. Although the phrase is difficult, it is a clear part of the specification and should be learnable by the majority of candidates. Both questions were equally popular and some very interesting insights to "you can't really believe in one religion unless you have studied others" were given by candidates who were clearly struggling elsewhere on the paper.

#### Section 5

Question 10 was more popular this year, but question 9 tended to produce a higher level of response than question 10, mainly because candidates had so few religious facts to use in their answers on Religion: Wealth and Poverty. This report commented last year that the specification says candidates can study either soap operas or the national daily press, therefore specific questions on soap operas have to give the option of answering on the national daily press. Many candidates chose the national daily press and simply wrote about an issue such as abortion or euthanasia rather than how it was dealt with and whether it was a good or bad way of dealing with the issue.

Several candidates in question 10 a) wrote about Oxfam rather than a religious agency. Most candidates answered question 10 b) in purely general terms such as "it would make Christians look better if they helped poor people" rather than referring to Christian teaching and principles, others thought the question meant why Christians should be taught about wealth and poverty as in a school syllabus. In Question 10c), candidates often ignored the word Christians and simply wrote about all rich people. Not only did they miss the whole point of the question, it meant that such candidates did not refer to specific Christian teachings and so could not score many marks.

## UNIT C - 5565 (100%), 5566 (80%)

Unit C is a popular unit especially with Catholic centres. The number of candidates entering for this unit is increasing and this is expected to continue next year. The examination succeeded in producing the wide range of performance levels expected in an examination with mainly whole cohort entry. The advent of on-line marking necessitated minor changes to the exam paper format, but these do not appear to have had any adverse effects on candidate performance.

### Section 1

This section was generally well answered, though many candidates had problems with question 1c) on causation which was perhaps why question 2 was much more popular than question 1. However, candidates answering question 1 performed very well on the other parts. Several candidates treated question 2c) as an evaluation rather than an understanding question. Such candidates gave a brief response on why some people do not believe in God, then spent a lot of time and wasted effort on why they are wrong. Only the first part of their answer could receive marks. "God gives meaning and purpose to life" caused problems despite last year's report indicating that this is a part of the specification.

### Section 2

Although question 4 was much more popular than question 3, candidates tended to perform better on question 3. In both questions, the a) and b) parts were well answered. Many candidates found problems with the different attitudes in 4 b) and 4c). Different attitudes to an issue within a religion are a key part of the specification (as they are in key stage 3 of the new National Framework for RE) and as such to gain top grades candidates must be able to identify which attitude is Catholic and which refers to another group (e.g. liberal, evangelical, Baptist, Methodist). When answering both d) questions, candidates again fell into the trap of not mentioning the catholic Christian view and on question 3d) candidates failed to comment on evidence for and against life after death, rather saying what people believed. On question 4d) some candidates ignored the word law in "the law on euthanasia should be changed" question.

### Section 3

This section was answered particularly well. Questions 5b and 6b were extremely well answered although candidates need to be warned that giving a simple list does not fully answer the question. Many candidates found question 5c) difficult and simply described a Catholic upbringing rather than explaining why Catholic Christianity thinks the family is important. The question on different attitudes to divorce in Christianity, question 6c) was much better answered than in the past, indicating more focused teaching.

### Section 4

Social harmony continues to pose problems for candidates and once again produced the lowest levels of response. Despite previous comments about the roles of men and women and attitudes to other religions, these questions continued to pose problems. Several candidates answered question 7c) in terms of which other religion is the best rather than being aware of exclusive and pluralist views. Again answers must refer to

Christian groups to gain higher grades. The answers to question 8 c) revealed that many candidates had a great deal of knowledge about Martin Luther King but had little or no idea of why he worked to promote racial harmony. This is a clear part of the specification and should be learnable by the majority of candidates. Question 8 was slightly more popular than question 7, possibly because the b) and d) questions were so accessible.

### Section 5

The questions were equally popular this year, but question 9 tended to produce a higher level of response than question 10, mainly because candidates had so few religious facts to use in their answers on Religion: Wealth and Poverty. This report commented last year that the specification says candidates can study either soap operas or the national daily press, therefore specific questions on soap operas have to give the option of answering on the national daily press. Many candidates chose the national daily press and simply wrote about an issue such as abortion or euthanasia rather than how it was dealt with and whether it was a good or bad way of dealing with the issue.

Several candidates in question 10 a) wrote about Oxfam rather than a religious agency. Many candidates answered question 10 b) in purely general terms such as "it would make Christians look better if they helped poor people" rather than referring to Christian teachings and principles. In Question 10c), candidates often ignored the word Christians and simply wrote about all rich people. Not only did they miss the whole point of the question, it meant that such candidates did not refer to specific Christian teachings and so could not score many marks.

## Unit D - 5567(100%), 5568(80%)

Once again, the entry for unit D represented a wide range of ability, including candidates who made full and comprehensive responses to the set tasks. The main weaknesses continue to lie in responses to (d) questions, where there is still a tendency to give only one point of view. Also, to achieve the highest marks, candidates need to show in their conclusions why they think their own view is preferable to an alternative. Many also continue to find difficulty with questions which ask for an understanding of different attitudes within the Muslim community to issues such as the role of women, or divorce. Here, they need to identify reasons for the differences, which will involve such factors as contrasting interpretations and emphases, or simply the distinction between traditional ideas and views which reflect responses to new situations.

### Section 1

The majority attempted question 2, which was answered thoroughly. There were some very full answers to Question (c) highlighting, for example, how the presence of so many devout Muslims from all over the world during the hajj strengthens a person's faith in Allah. Some, however, simply described what happens during the hajj. Those who did attempt question 1 found it difficult to present the argument from causation to support belief in God. They tended either to misunderstand the issue, or to present the argument from design.

### Section 2

This section presented few difficulties in either question. Most were able to outline different attitudes to abortion in Question 3(b). Relatively few candidates referred to descriptions of paradise in the Qur'an, such as well-watered gardens. There were some very good answers to Question 4(d) about evidence for life after death, mostly citing the teaching of the Qur'an. In a few cases candidates showed real insight by agreeing with the statement that there is no scientific evidence for life after death, but that is of no consequence because in the last resort it is a matter of faith.

### Section 3

An unusually large number of candidates did not know the terms 'khutbah' and 'promiscuity', though they are shown as key words in the specification. In Question 5(c), the majority simply answered as if the task had been to outline the different activities which go on in a mosque, rather than explain how these activities may actually help with the upbringing of children. In answering Question 6(b) relatively few candidates took account of the fact that sex outside marriage refers to both pre-marital sex and adultery.

### Section 4

This was the Section that was answered least well across the whole paper. This applied in particular to describing the difference between prejudice and discrimination (Question 7(b), to explaining different attitudes to the role of women in the Muslim community (Question 7(c) (many treated this as though the question was about the contrasting roles of men and women), and to explaining different attitudes among Muslims towards other religions (Question 8(c)

## Section 5

The overwhelming majority chose Question 10. Those who did attempt Question 9 tended to give rather general answers without referring to specific examples. There were a few very well informed and thoughtful answers to the question about the way in which the national daily press had dealt with recent events at home and abroad. Generally, Question 10 was answered thoroughly, especially in (b) where a number of candidates drew on the teaching of Islam on a range of issues to do with wealth and poverty, including *riba*. However, only a few gave full weight to the word 'today'. Surprisingly, on Question 10(a), a significant minority did not refer to the work of relieving poverty in the world. They either described, sometimes in great detail, how the chosen agency raises its funds in this country, or they explained why the agency undertakes this work, referring accurately to the principles of *zakat* but not answering the question set.



## UNIT E - 5569 (100%), 5570 (80%)

As for last year, the entry for this unit was in single figures and once again it appeared that these candidates had been entered on the basis of their faith. There was an extremely high level of response with candidates showing good knowledge and understanding of their faith and the ability to evaluate controversial issues within Judaism.



## UNIT F - 5571 (100%), 5572 (80%)

### Section 1

In general the comments made regarding the questions which are common to paper A as well as paper F in the report on unit A are confirmed here, especially with regard to question 2d). Question 1 was not nearly as popular as question 2. Question 1c) was very badly answered by several centres where no distinction had been made between teleological and cosmological arguments for the existence of God.

### Section 2

This section was quite well balanced in terms of candidate's selection. Most questions were answered reasonably well. The main problems were that many students found it difficult to outline 'different attitudes to abortion in Hinduism' in question 3b) and that many students explained 'what' Hindus believe about life after death, rather than 'why' they believe in life after death, in question 3c).

### Section 3

Questions in this section were equally popular and were generally well answered. An important point here is the format of question 6c) which asks 'why there are different attitudes to divorce in Hinduism'. While candidates found it easy to give different reasons for divorce and even different attitudes among Hindus, they struggled to explain 'why' these differences exist.

### Section 4

Question 7c), concerning the role of women in Hinduism, was very badly answered by candidates from several centres. Most tended to concentrate on the changing status of women in Hinduism without referring to the variety of roles which women undertake within the tradition. The English used in question 8c) was misinterpreted by many candidates; perhaps it is ambiguous! These candidates took the question to mean 'contrast the differences between other religions and Hinduism'.

### Section 5

Very few candidates indeed chose to answer question 9. Question 10 was well answered and elicited rather better results than some previous Section 5's.



## UNIT G - 5573 (100%), 5574 (80%)

The entry for this unit is still very small. Most candidates seemed to have been entered on the basis of their faith with no specific teaching of the specification. This is quite understandable, but good results can only be obtained if candidates know the content of the specification. If Sikh candidates are being taught Unit A in class and then entered for Unit G, they should be given a list of the extra elements on which they will need to find information from their gurdwara.



**5561 (A) Religion and Life: Christianity and One other Religion (67578 candidates)**

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	79	66	53	40	31	23	15	7
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

**5562 (A) Religion and Life: Christianity and One other Religion (17368 candidates)**

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	99	84	69	55	44	34	24	14
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper (01)	80	63	53	43	33	26	20	14	8
Raw mark boundary for coursework (02)	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

**5563 (B) Religion and Life: Christianity (19394 candidates)**

**5565 (C) Religion and Life: Catholic Christianity (19842 candidates)**

**5567 (D) Religion and Life: Islam (2187 candidates)**

**5569 (E) Religion and Life: Judaism (16 candidates)**

**5571 (F) Religion and Life: Hinduism (131 candidates)**

**5573 (G) Religion and Life: Sikhism (6 candidates)**

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	103	82	68	54	41	33	25	17	9
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

**5564 (B) Religion and Life: Christianity (3882 candidates)**

**5566 (C) Religion and Life: Catholic Christianity (3528 candidates)**

**5568 (D) Religion and Life: Islam (961 candidates)**

**5570 (E) Religion and Life: Judaism (6 candidates)**

**5572 (F) Religion and Life: Hinduism (65 candidates)**

**5574 (G) Religion and Life: Sikhism (8 candidates)**

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	120	101	86	71	56	46	36	26	16
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Raw mark boundary for written paper (01)	80	65	55	44	34	28	22	16	10
Raw mark boundary for coursework (02)	69	65	58	51	45	36	28	20	12

**For 5562, 5564, 5566, 5568, 5570, 5572, 5574 (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 of this.

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
1481/1483	200	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40

**Notes**

**Boundary mark:** the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.





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