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Examiners' Report
June 2011

GCSE Religious Studies 5RS03 01

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Introduction

This is the second year the new specification for Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies has been assessed and numbers have substantially increased from last year.

The specification introduced a few new topics and the weighting of the assessment objectives has changed from the legacy specification. The specification continues to be a very popular course as teachers and schools recognise the benefits of an examinable course that both interests and educates young people. The variety of choice within the new specification allows teachers to teach the course that most suits their students.

Unit 3 covers Roman Catholic Christianity, and this unit continues to be a popular unit as it addresses many moral and spiritual issues affecting young people today and importantly fulfils all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference for Religious Education at Key Stage 4.

There is a choice of two questions per section, each of these has four sub-questions. Candidates can either attempt the sub-questions in the top question (odd numbers) or the sub-questions in the bottom question (even numbers). Candidates who choose questions from a mixture of the top and bottom questions will not receive marks for all their responses and as such are at a clear disadvantage.

Candidates are asked to indicate which question they have answered by putting a cross in a box at the top of the paper. Some candidates did not do this and they should be reminded to do this as part of examination preparation.

(a) questions ask for either a definition or examples, and are assessing AO1

(b) questions are asking for the candidate's own opinion backed by two reasons, and are assessing AO2

(c) questions are 'Explain why...' or 'Explain how...' questions, and are assessing AO1

(d) questions are divided into two parts, (i) requires the candidate's opinion backed by reasons, and (ii) needs an alternative opinion backed by reasons. At least one of the reasons used in the whole of part (d) must refer to Roman Catholic Christianity.

The amount of space on the question paper is more than adequate for candidates to achieve maximum marks. There is no need for candidates to write more than this. Almost all the candidates who used extra paper had already achieved maximum marks on that question. Any candidate who needs extra space can use that space allocated to other questions as long as they clearly indicate on their paper that this is what they have done.

A number of candidates did not complete the final section due to timing difficulties. Candidates should be encouraged to spend about twenty minutes per question leaving ten minutes to check through work at the end of the paper.

Question 1 (a)

The majority of candidates who attempted this question gained full marks. This was an easy question to get full marks by using a glossary definition but, like the example, many candidates were awarded maximum marks for an alternative wording.

Write your answer here:

(a) The believe that God is ~~all power~~ knows
whats to happen in the future and past.



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Examiner Comments

This is an alternative wording of a correct response.



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Examiner Tip

The easiest way to get full marks for the (a) questions is to learn the glossary definitions.

Question 1 (b)

Most candidates recognised that part (b) was a question about what science says about the creation of the world. Very few candidates agreed with the statement. Better answers were given by candidates who disagreed with the statement and said that science was unable to prove God did not create the world. They frequently did this by referring to the design argument and developed their reason by discussing the concept of a designer linked to purpose and complexity. Other candidates referred to evolution and the Big Bang. Some able candidates gave a very detailed answer using the Big Bang but as the question asks for two reasons they frequently only gave one very developed answer that could not be awarded more than two marks.

(b) I do not think that science proves that God did not create the world because the theories that science puts forwards are based on speculations and may not be true. There is no actual proof that everything was created by coincidence and therefore I believe that God created everything.

Another reason for my point of view is that the world is far too complex for it not to have been designed for a purpose. I believe that there is no way it could have been an accident and therefore God must be the creator.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate gives two developed reasons. They have made it very clear where the second reason begins.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Starting your second reason on a separate line makes it easier to check you have given enough reasons.

Question 2 (a)

This question was very well answered by candidates and most candidates who attempted it got full marks.

Write your answer here:

(a) agnosticism means that you are not sure whether what you believe in and you are in between believing and not believing.



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Examiner Comments

The glossary definition is 'not being sure if God exists'. However, this candidate does not mention God, and therefore their response is only partially correct.

Question 2 (b) (c) (d)

For part (b) most candidates were able to state their own opinion and then give a reason for it. However, frequently candidates simply described a religious upbringing, which did not answer the question set.

This part (c) question was well answered by those candidates who were able to name a programme and explain why it might affect their faith. It was less well answered by candidates who described whole programmes or did not link them to how they might affect belief in God. Those who did not refer to an identifiable programme or film were unable to go beyond level 2.

Many candidates did not realise that the part (d) question was about whether God designed the world. This led to some answers purely about creation, which did not answer the question set.

Question 3 (a)

Most candidates knew the glossary definition for euthanasia. However, there were some candidates who did not know the glossary definition, which highlights the fact that a person must be seriously ill, and used literal definitions such as 'an easy and gentle death' which did not indicate that a person must be seriously ill and so were awarded partial marks.

Question 3 (b) (c) (d)

For part (b) most candidates were able to state their own opinion about whether the media should be free to criticise what religions say about matters of life and death and then give a reason for it. However, some candidates were not able to develop their reasons. Better candidates were able to refer to a film or programme to develop their answer.

The majority of answers to this part (c) question were very good and candidates were able to answer either by giving a number of non-religious reasons or by developing two or three reasons with examples. Lower achieving candidates included religious responses in their answers.

In part (d) it was clear that some candidates did not know the law about abortion in the UK. For example, many candidates thought that it was legal in cases of rape – without identifying the parts of the UK this is true, and some thought a woman was allowed freedom to choose. A number of candidates interpreted it as a question on whether abortion should be allowed rather than addressing the question of whether the law should be changed.

(d) (i) I don't think the law on abortion should be changed. Like many Catholics, I believe that life is Holy and only God has the right to take away a life. If the law on abortion were to change and abortion was allowed after 24 weeks, even more women would be 'playing God' and taking away the life of their unborn child, which they have no right to do. Also, if the law on abortion was changed and abortion was allowed on-demand instead of just for the people who 'need' it, then even more lives would be ended unnecessarily.

(ii) Some people might think that the law on abortion should be changed because, unlike Catholics, they don't think life begins at conception so therefore abortion isn't murder and is an alright thing to do. Also, some people will think that changing the laws surrounding abortion is a good thing because a woman has the right to do what she likes with her body and it is her decision, not God's, to get rid of an unwanted baby or not.



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For part (d)(i), this candidate was given maximum marks for giving one developed and one simple reason. They clearly understand the law on abortion and therefore argue that the law should not be changed as it would cause yet more problems. Note that the first reason is, in fact, in the third sentence ('If the law on abortion were to change...'), with the development being given in the second sentence about life being holy. A further reason is given in the final sentence. Part (d)(ii) contains two simple reasons.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Make sure that you have shown clearly whether you agree or do not agree with the statement by starting (d)(i) 'I think/agree...' or 'I don't think/disagree...' as shown in this answer.

Question 4 (a)

Part 4(a) was well answered by most candidates. Candidates need to know the key word definitions not only because of the part (a) questions but also because the other sub-questions will use the words within their questions. If candidates do not know the key words they may not understand the meaning of some of the other questions.

Question 4 (b) (c) (d)

For part (b) candidates were usually able to state their own opinion and then give at least two reasons for this opinion, with many candidates contrasting Church teaching on the sanctity of life with the freedom to choose. Candidates who did less well were those who discussed turning off life support machines which is already legal in the UK.

This part (c) question was well answered by the majority of candidates, many of whom supported their answers with references to Gospel texts. The best answers referred to the Church's social teaching. However, some candidates simply outlined the work of CAFOD, and some very full answers were only awarded level 1 for just describing the issue.

This part (d) question was generally well answered, with frequent references to Jesus' resurrection, bible teachings and the Creed, contrasting with science, space exploration and lack of evidence. Ghosts and mediums and near-death experiences were used on both sides of the argument.

(b) I do not think that euthanasia should be legal in the UK because ~~because~~ the bible states "thou shall not kill" and if I feel that ~~with~~ euthanasia is killing even though it is your choice.

I think that euthanasia should be kept illegal in the UK because I believe that the best way ~~too~~ to die is naturally because God chooses your fate and by ~~and~~ euthanasia you are ruining it.

(c) the reason that CAFOD are trying to end world poverty is because they believe that every human has equal rights and people that are in LIC's are not getting the same rights as people who are living in HIC's.

They are also trying to help because the people who are living in poverty are not able to get work or enough money for food or their child's education, so CAFOD build schools for free.

The people at CAFOD also always remember the "Golden rule" treat others how you would like to be treated.

(d) (i) I believe that life after death is possible because people like mediums are able to talk to people that are dead and are in a life after death situation.

People also believe that they have seen ghosts which are supposedly people who are in life after death and still roaming around where their body lies.

(ii) Some people may disagree because some mediums have been found to be fake and they have also found that some ghost sightings are just reflections from something. This stops people from believing in life after death.



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Examiner Comments

This is an example of a response where the candidate clearly has some knowledge but should have added more reasons and examples to their part (c) and part (d) answers.

For part (b) the candidate's own opinion is given with two reasons "thou shall not kill" and "God choices (sic) your fate", with both of these reasons developed.

For part (c) the answer gives two reasons for CAFOD's work "belief in equal rights" and "the Golden Rule". The answer is coherent and therefore is awarded level 2.

For part (d)(i), the candidate gives their own opinion and then two reasons "medians" (sic) and "ghosts". For part (d) (ii), two reasons "fake" and "reflection" are given. However, the candidate has not referred to Roman Catholic Christianity in either part (d)(i) or part (d)(ii) and therefore cannot be awarded maximum marks.



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Examiner Tip

Remember to read through your work after you have completed it to check that you have written what you intended to write and that you cannot add anything else to your answers. In part (d) questions you should check that you have included a reference to Roman Catholic Christianity.

Question 5 (a)

Most candidates who answered this part (a) question gained full marks, many giving the glossary definition.

Question 5 (b) (c) (d)

For part (b) most candidates were able to state their own opinion about whether sex outside marriage is acceptable. Most candidates gave two reasons about premarital sex but some candidates gave one reason agreeing with pre-marital sex and one disagreeing with extra marital sex. As long as the candidate clearly indicated that both opinions were their point of view they could be credited.

In part (c) many candidates showed a good knowledge of the purposes of marriage. Some candidates were not able to link these to the marriage ceremony and therefore, despite clearly having the knowledge required, could not get maximum marks. Other candidates referred to pre-marriage courses, which were not part of the question.

There were few full mark answers for part (d) question. Good answers discussed issues such as the role of the Church in supporting religious families, the strength and unity that religion can give a family, and the rewards religious people get for raising a family. However, some responses only gave descriptions of brainwashing and forced religious practice.

(b) ~~correct~~ In my opinion sex out of marriage is acceptable because it is not as strict ~~as~~ as it was 50 years ago and also there is contraception to stop from getting pregnant and starting new life. Some relationships cannot make the time or may not afford getting married or they may be too young and not want the responsibility of marriage.

(c) When a Roman Catholic wedding happens it is usually traditional, with the white dress to show they are pure and the ceremony being held in a Catholic church and for the vows to be the same. The vows play an important part in the ceremony because you are making a commitment to your ~~the~~ soul mate and also to God, to keep that promise of e.g. faithfulness to your partner and not committing sins ~~of~~ of God's way of life. ✓
If this were to happen you would have to repent your sins and ask ~~the~~ God for his forgiveness.

(d) (i) I think that all Christians should ~~accept~~ accept the ways of contraception because it helps & relationships to enjoy each other and not ~~get~~ ~~the~~ make a new life because they may not be ready or they do not want that responsibility. It also stops people from getting STI's which will then help health companies and the STI's will not spread.

(ii) Some Christians would disagree because they feel the the sanctity of a life belongs to God, so therefore if they use contraception they are killing a life of God's. Also if people are in a serious relationship they should prove they love each other by making life to prove that they are ~~not~~ committed to their vows to ~~the~~ each other and God.



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Examiner Comments

For part (b), this candidate has given 4 reasons "not as strict", "contraception available", "cannot afford to get married" and "too young". However, only **two** reasons can be credited in part (b) questions.

For part (c), one reason is given "vows show commitment" which is developed by the example given.

For part (d), the candidate has given two reasons for each part. However, the candidate had answered a mixture of sub-questions from 5 and 6 which is not permitted.

Question 6 (a)

Civil partnership as it is a new word for this specification and most candidates knew the glossary definition. However, many candidates used the term 'gay marriage' which was only partially credited.

Question 6 (b) (c) (d)

This was the most popular question this year.

In part (b) most candidates were able to state their own opinion about whether Christians should accept divorce and gave developed reason linked to scripture and the nature of marriage. Some candidates were unable to give any reasons why Christians should or should not accept divorce other than 'everyone should be happy' which meant they achieved low marks. Similarly candidates who ignored the element in the question referring to 'religious people' achieved low marks.

Part (c) was well answered by many of the candidates who were able to clearly explain changes and why they affected attitudes to family life. Too often, though, candidates gave general answers explaining changes in attitudes to marriage, and were not able to link these changes to family life, thereby not gaining the marks their knowledge deserved. Candidates must read questions carefully to ensure they answer the question set.

This part (d) question caused very few problems for candidates and most were able to give three reasons backing their view in (d)(i) and three reasons for an alternative view in (d) (ii). More able candidates used examples and quotations to support their opinion. Some candidates did mix this topic up with abortion and it is important that candidates learn specialist terms to prevent this.

(d) (i) I disagree with this statement because the church teaches that we can not use contraception because it stops the possibility of creating a new life which it also says we should all be open to accept it. Also because some ~~contrace~~ contraception doesn't let the embryo not attach attach to the womb which is killing a human life which ~~the~~ Christianity teaches is wrong

(ii) Some people might disagree with me because ~~to~~ some forms of contraception can stop people from ~~of~~ getting sexual transmitted disease for example condoms. Also because it can control the amount of kids that people who want to have.



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In part (d)(i) and (d)(ii) the candidate had given two clear reasons for both parts of their answer, with a reference to the teaching of the Church. The use of the word 'also' makes it clear where each new reason begins.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

It is important that you make it clear where each new reason begins to help you see if you have given enough reasons.

Question 7 (a)

It was noticeable that many of questions 7 and 8 were not complete; candidates should be advised to spend about 20 minutes on each question.

Most candidates knew the glossary definition for discrimination. However, many candidates used the word discriminate within their definition which was only partially credited. Others gave examples, which was only partially correct, or confused it with prejudice, which gained no marks.

Question 7 (b) (c) (d)

Better candidates recognised that part (b) was a question asking about women's rights in religion and they were able to gain good marks by developing their reasons, using either scriptural examples or references to the issue of women priests. Lower scoring responses did not realise that the question was not a general one on women's rights in society and as such they did not answer the question set.

In part (c) community cohesion and the government is a new topic for this specification. This was well answered by candidates who had learned reasons for government action. However many candidates simply described the governmental action limiting them to level 1.

In part (d) most candidates were able to respond to the quote with answers giving reasons for and against Christians converting others. Some candidates did not refer to Catholic Christianity. Once again, it needs to be emphasised that in part (d) questions candidates should check that they have included a reference to Roman Catholic Christianity.

(b) I do think that woman should have the same ~~rights~~ rights as men because we are all equal and have rights. Women should be able to work and earn their own money just like men and not sit at home. If a woman does not have a partner she will have to go out and make her own money. Also if a woman does ~~not have~~ ^{have} kids and her partner leaves she is going to have to make money to feed and clothe them and her-self.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This part (b) answer has only one reason given in the first sentence, which can apply to both religious rights and general rights. The rest of the answer is about women's rights in society, so is awarded no further marks.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Remember to make it clear that you are giving your own point of view by starting with 'I think...', 'I agree...'

Question 8 (a)

Most candidates were able to give a correct definition, with a few candidates confusing it with religious pluralism.

(a) Religious freedom is the freedom to be able to chose
which religion you want to believe in



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Examiner Comments

This is an example of a correct definition using alternative wording.



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Examiner Tip

The easiest way to get full marks on (a) questions is to learn the glossary definitions.

Question 8 (b) (c) (d)

In part (b) most candidates were able to state their own opinion as to whether living in a multi-faith society causes problems and then give reasons for it. Most candidates saw it as a positive and gave examples from personal experience. However, some candidates confused multi-faith with multi-ethnic and did not answer the question set.

This part (c) question was well answered by candidates who were able to use their knowledge of different Christian groups to give a number of reasons. Less able candidates did not answer this question or were unable to give more than one accurate reason. Those who simply described gained only level 1.

Part (d) was generally well answered, though few candidates achieved full marks. Many candidates referred to the issue of women priests in both supporting and opposing the statement. Others were able to respond to the quote but were not able to give religious reasons why treatment is equal or unequal. A few candidates gave answers that were not based within the UK and so gained few marks.

(d) (i) 'Men and women are still not treated equally in the UK'

I agree because although women can now do alot of things men can, there are still jobs and activities that only men can do.

Women intend to get treated worse in prison because it is expected for bad, criminal behaviour of men but women need more punishment because it is not expected.

(ii)

People will disagree with this and state that the few jobs men can do but women cant is simply because studies show women are mentally and emotionally stronger but men are physically stronger. A Religious arguement could be that God was a man so that puts the male species at a higher rank in society.



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In this response to (d)(i) there is only one reason given, in the first paragraph. The second paragraph does not relate to the question.

For (d)(ii) there is one reason in the first sentence "differences in treatment are simply due to differences in strength". Again, the second sentence does not relate to the question.



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Examiner Tip

Remember to refer to an aspect of Roman Catholic Christianity at some point in your answer or else you cannot score more than 3 marks for the whole of part(d).

Summary

Candidates produced some very interesting answers to the questions posed. This indicated that they and their teachers had not only studied the topic but importantly had linked them to their everyday life and that reflected in the society around them.

Some general points can be made on how best to answer the various question types:

Maximum marks on the part (a) questions are easily gained by learning the Edexcel glossary definitions and this is a constant feature throughout the paper.

In part (b) questions candidates are asked to give **two** reasons for their point of view, and therefore giving more than two will not gain any extra marks. Some candidates gave three or even four reasons, but could only gain two marks for what otherwise could have been high scoring answers. It is also important for candidates to realise that both reasons need to be developed for maximum marks to be awarded. These questions also ask candidates for **the candidate's** point of view. Simply stating that 'some people' or 'Christians' hold a particular point of view is not sufficient. It has to be clear that it is the candidate's own point of view for marks to be awarded. The easiest way to gain full marks is for candidates to concentrate on stating their opinion and writing two separate reasons for it, each in a distinct paragraph and to develop each of the reasons with an example or a quote.

In part (c) questions there are 8 marks available within 4 levels, each with a range of two marks. Candidates can gain the higher mark within the level by writing coherently. These questions assess AO1 and so candidates will always be asked to 'Explain how' or 'Explain why', and it is important that this aspect of the question is addressed.

Many of the part (d) questions this year produced interesting answers. However candidates should ensure that they start by stating their own view and reasons for it in part (d)(i) part and state reasons why someone might hold a different view in part (d)(ii), rather than mixing the two halves. At least one of the reasons given in either (i) or (ii) must refer in some way to Roman Catholic Christianity to go beyond 3 marks.

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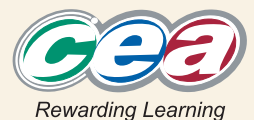
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