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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

**Pearson Edexcel Level 3 GCE**  
**Religious Studies**

Advanced

PAPER 4: Study of Religion

Option 4C: Hinduism

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Summer 2023

Publications Code 9RS0\_4C\_2306\_ER

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## **9RS0 4C Advanced Hinduism**

### **Introduction**

This paper enabled candidates to respond to their in-depth study of Hinduism. They were able to explain the beliefs, values and teachings, sources of wisdom and authority, and the practices that shape and express religious identity within Hinduism.

The responses showed that candidates were able to write extremely well, they had clearly shown improvement in the structure of their arguments since AS Level. There was good concise knowledge and understanding (AO1) of Hinduism, demonstrating the key ideas from the specification. Most candidates were able to assess and analyse i.e. apply the AO2 skills required to the concepts that were examined in this paper, some candidates showed an outstanding level of scholarship. Most candidates managed their time well and answered all questions in detail. Where candidates did not perform so well, their responses were less detailed and the AO2 questions contained more AO1 content than AO2.

### **Q1 Explore beliefs about dharma in Hinduism. (8)**

Most responses to this question scored well. The answers indicated that candidates had a thorough knowledge and understanding of Hindu dharma. Many candidates began with an explanation of Hindu dharma, linked to specialist terminology about duty and righteousness and then led onto the beliefs associated with it for example the purusharthas. The most effective responses displayed a wide range of knowledge and understanding, especially those that referred to the impact of dharma on Hindu life.

Weaker responses tended to describe dharma in general and gave a narrow range of knowledge and understanding rather than delivering the breadth or depth of knowledge and understanding required by the question.

### **Q2 Assess the impact of multicultural society on Hindu religious practice. (12)**

Most candidates were able to access this question and recognised the impact of living in a multicultural society on modern Hinduism. Some candidates answered with reference to secularization and its impact of Hindu practice. Better candidates made the link to Hinduism historically being formed by the various societies and argued that there has always been societal pressures on the development of Hinduism. Most candidates presented an item of knowledge and understanding (AO1) before analysing it (AO2) and continued to do so throughout the response. Some candidates began with a paragraph of content and description, illustrating AO1 and then used the rest of the response to assess and provide counter arguments. Both approaches are legitimate, but the best answers were those that integrated their AO2 material throughout their AO1 right from the start of their essay, thus achieving the focus on AO2 required. Weaker

candidates clearly lacked knowledge and understanding about Hindu dharma and focused on a description/ definition and little else.

**Q3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about the Hindu idea of karma. (10)**

Candidates responded well to this question; they were clearly knowledgeable about karma as a concept within Hinduism and most candidates used the content to the passage to support their answer. There were secure and detailed responses that considered the importance of the 'action-effect' and 'merit or demerit'.

Weak responses either ignored the passage completely and wrote that they knew about karma or gave limited information, mostly copying chunks from the extract without commenting on them.

**Q3 (b) Analyse key Hindu beliefs about the relationship between karma and reincarnation. (20)**

There were some strong responses to this question. Candidates frequently began with an explanation of what karma and reincarnation are, this means that there was a lot of AO1 information. The best responses showed significant understanding of the impact of how the two concepts interact showing good evaluative and appraisal skills. Candidates with weaker knowledge and understanding usually ran out of information so their answer was very brief showing a narrow range of knowledge and unable to achieve more than Level 1.

**Q4 Evaluate the role of sacrifices and Agni in the development of Hinduism. (30)**

This question provided some very interesting responses and was a great discriminator of candidate's religious studies skills. Candidates were able to show their depth of understanding of the role of sacrifices and Agni in the development of Hinduism. Candidates were able to discuss the value of sacrifices in historical Hinduism and their importance or lack thereof to Hindus today. Candidates accurately used specialist language and terminology terms.

The strongest responses considered the value and relevance of sacrifices and Agni and made judgements referring to the question which asked about the development of Hinduism.

Weaker responses simply described sacrifices and Agni with an overemphasis on knowledge and examples, ignoring the requirement to link to the development of Hinduism and little use of AO2 skills.

## **Summary**

Based on the performance on this paper students should:

- Apply material specifically to the question asked.
- Write concisely and use evidence to support arguments
- Learn and use specialist language and terminology
- Ensure that answers requiring AO2 limit the amount of AO1 material given.
- Remember that contrasting arguments to an idea is an effective way to show AO2 skills
- Be familiar with the requirements of the specification
- Practice answering exam questions in the time given

