



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel Advanced Level
In Religious Studies (9RS0)
Paper 4F Sikhism

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9RS0 4F Advanced Sikhism

Introduction

This paper enabled candidates to respond to their in-depth study of Sikhism. 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 Sikhism. Many candidates were able to show good knowledge and understanding (AO1) of Sikhism, demonstrating the key ideas studied in the specification. Most candidates were able to assess and analyse (AO2) the beliefs that were studied in this paper; some candidates showed an outstanding level of understanding of Sikhism. Most candidates managed their time well and answered all questions in the level of detail required. Where candidates did not perform so well, their responses were less detailed and the AO2 questions contained more AO1 information than AO2.

Q1 Explore the impact of British rule in India on Gurdwara reform. (8)

Many responses to this question scored well. The answers indicated that candidates had a thorough knowledge and understanding of the impact of British rule in India on Sikhism. Candidates were usually able to identify the effect of British rule in India on Sikhism, and most were able to focus on Gurdwara reform. The most effective responses focussed entirely on Gurdwara reform and the impact this had on Sikhs at the time, thus comprehensively developing key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding (AO1) as required by the level descriptors in the mark scheme. Weaker responses tended to give a narrow range of knowledge and understanding often focussing just on British Rule in India rather than delivering the breadth or depth of knowledge and understanding required by the question.

Q2 Assess the significance of interfaith relations between Guru Nanak and Hindus, Muslims, and the yogis. (12)

Most candidates were able to access this question. Many candidates were able to give a description of the significance of interfaith relations including a discussion of the lack of importance, which fulfilled the focus on AO2 required. Some candidates answered by describing the Guru Nanak's River Experience, unfortunately these candidates only fulfilled AO1 and therefore gained low marks. Better candidates discussed the impact of Guru Nanak's interfaith teachings and actions, referring to specific events and what they achieved. It is important that candidates are familiar with all the key terms and the content of the specification.

Q3a (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about the impact of non-Sikh culture on the values and practices in the Sikh diaspora. (10)

There were some extremely interesting responses to this question with some candidates linking the information to personal experience in the United Kingdom. Most candidates responded well to this question and used the passage to support ideas about the impact of non-Sikh culture on values in the Sikh diaspora. There were some secure and detailed responses that considered the impact on Punjabi cultural practices as well as Sikh practice specifically in the Darbar Sahib, but some candidates did not use the passage and gained fewer marks. The best responses were able to show knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs which were detailed and fully developed using examples from Sikh life. Weak responses simply repeated the passage and then reworded it, rather than expanding on the information and clarifying what it meant or providing further background information.

Q3b Analyse the role of women within Sikhism. (20)

There were many good responses to this question, surprisingly so for such a wide question. There were some candidates that failed to recognise that this question was about the role of women. Most candidates were able to reveal their knowledge and understanding about the role of women in the development of Sikhism and link this to the role of women today, some referring to the passage given. Some were able to critically deconstruct religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning using analysis and accessing AO2 marks. Candidates with weaker knowledge and understanding usually relied on a description of the history of women in Sikhism rather than discussing anything about the role of women in Sikhism today, and the possible disparity between Sikh teaching and practice. Such answers were often rambling rather than organised and showed only basic connections between a limited range of elements in the question and, as such, they were unable to achieve more than Level 1.

Q4 Evaluate the significance of miri-piri as a distinctive feature of Sikhism. (30)

This question was a good discriminator of candidates' religious studies skills. It gave candidates the opportunity to discuss the significance of miri-piri with a focus on whether it is a distinctive feature of the religion. Most candidates now know to give the correct amount of time to this question allowing them to show the AO1 and AO2 skills required. It seems some now begin with this question whereas 3b was often left unfinished, gaining lower marks as a result. Most candidates were able to describe what miri-piri is and how it is symbolised showing a depth of knowledge and understanding. Better candidates accurately used specialist language and terminology to discuss the reasoning behind the development of miri-piri and whether it is needed in today's society. The strongest responses were able to critically deconstruct religious information about miri-piri being part of social justice leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning. They were then able to contrast this with information about whether there is a need for Sikhs to be active politically. Weaker responses simply described the khanda gaining some LO1 marks.

Summary

Based on the performance on this paper students should:

- Apply material specific 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 all requirements of the specification
- Practice answering exam questions in the time given