

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Religious Studies (5RS07)
Religion and Life Based on a Study of
Sikhism

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The unit continues to attract candidates from Sikh and non-Sikh backgrounds. Candidates are advised to carefully study the glossary in the specification to learn the meanings of terms such as 'quality of life'. Generally, pupils found it hard to secure full marks for part (b) questions. They must look at the demands of the question and focus on two reasons only in order to support their views. They should explain each of these two reasons in detail, perhaps by offering an example or supporting quotation or fact.

Section 1

This section was generally well answered, though some candidates experienced problems with question 1(b). They did not focus on how the media can affect belief in God but introduced information relevant to other areas such as media portrayal of family life. For question 2(c), candidates produced a good range of arguments from design. Some candidates listed the main points but needed to explain them; part (c) questions can be responded to through explaining a wide range of factors, up to four, clearly or by explaining fewer factors in greater depth.

Section 2

Candidates were generally able to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject matter of this section effectively. For example, question 3(d) generated a range of interesting responses concerning euthanasia and murder. However, some candidates did not consider the precise wording of questions. For example, question 4(c) concerned the impact of Sikh beliefs about life after death on their everyday lives. Some candidates described or explained the beliefs in life after death in great detail, but not the impact on everyday life.

Section 3

Candidates provided mature reflection on the use of contraception for question 5(b) and explained a range of reasons why some Sikhs are opposed to divorce on question 5(c). However, responses to question 5(d) did not recognise the fact that there are different types of families.

Performance on question 6(b) was good with responses showing an awareness of a range of cultural as well as religious factors surrounding children and family life. Candidates demonstrated good levels of tolerance in addressing the issue of homosexuality in 6(d).

Section 4

Overall, questions on this section were well-answered well but candidates must ensure that they divide their time equally between sections across the question paper.

For question 7(b), candidates provided variations of a single point in favour of multi-ethnic societies and in turn they could not be credited marks beyond level 2. Some confused the term multi-faith with multi-ethnic society.

There were very detailed responses to question 7 (c) explaining why Sikhs reject sexism, and on 7(d), candidates provided a range of careful reflections about the issue of inter-faith marriage.

Question 8 was less popular. In question 8(c) on the media, some candidates referred to homosexuality which is a topic from section 3, rather than this section. Media questions must be answered with reference to material from the relevant section from which the question is asked.

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