

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Religious Studies (5RS07)

Unit 7: Religion and life based on a
study of Sikhism

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Unit 7 Religion and Life Based on a Study of Sikhism

Candidates are advised to carefully study the Glossary to learn key terms. Candidates can improve their answers to part (b) questions by focusing on only two reasons for their point of view. They should explain each of these reasons fully so that the depth of their reasoning or evidence is made clear. Evidence could include a quotation or example. At the same time candidates continue to excel at part (c) questions demonstrating secure knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. They should ensure that they include their reasons in the first part of d) before explaining why someone would disagree in the second part of d).

Section 1

Candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of Glossary definitions in questions 1a and 2a. In question 1a they were able to provide a range of reasons to support their point of view about religious upbringing but they did not always group these into two main reasons, supported by evidence or other reasons. However, in question 2b they often gave two reasons but did not develop either of them. Question 1c about religious experience and question 2c about the media were attempted successfully. Question 1d about the problem of suffering and question 2d about contemporary miracles demonstrated secure understanding of theological issues as well as current relevance.

Section 2

Many candidates answered this section to a high standard but again too many candidates had not mastered the Glossary, for example, question 3a – voluntary euthanasia. Candidates showed a solid grasp of material in relation to abortion and life after death but were less secure in discussion of wealth and poverty. More time should be devoted to teaching this component of this unit.

Section 3

Candidates demonstrated a secure understanding of the Glossary. They were also able to present arguments for and against sex before marriage, extra marital sex, contraception and divorce. They were able to consider changing attitudes towards homosexuality. Candidates need to improve their focus on the demands of the questions – for example, question 6b was asking for a personal response about the degree of change in relation to attitudes towards homosexuality, rather than their views about homosexuality. Again, question 6d asked about the impact of divorce on family life, rather than reasons why divorce might be justified or not. Candidates need to focus on the precise wording of the questions rather than presenting pre-prepared answers.

Section 4

Candidates demonstrated an acceptable understanding of the Glossary terms. However, they provided general explanations of religious freedom and prejudice which meant that they sometimes lost marks through vagueness; it would be better if candidates learnt the definitions provided. However, most marks were lost as candidates continue to ignore the distinction between ethnicity as a racial category and faith as a belief system. Hindus and Muslims are considered as faiths and not ethnic groups. This confusion negatively impacted answers to question 7c and question 8b. They demonstrated a secure understanding of the issues surrounding interfaith marriages in question 8c and conversion in question 7d, including religious teachings outside of Sikhism. There was an improvement in the quality of responses to the question on community cohesion on question 8d.

