

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Religious Studies
(5RS14/01)

Unit 14: Sikhism

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The unit continues to attract a large number of entries from pupils not of a Sikh background. Pupils are advised to carefully study the Glossary to learn key terms. Pupils 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.

Section 1

This section was attempted successfully, with pupils demonstrating knowledge about the caste system and the importance of social justice and voluntary service. The evaluative (d) questions were particularly well answered, with pupils considering the precise wording of the questions carefully to consider the importance of the Mool Mantar in relation to other sources of information about the Divine and to offer their own response to the God-centred lifestyle as well as explain why someone would disagree with them. Some pupils could benefit from precise study of the Glossary.

Section 2

Pupils answered this section to a high standard. In particular, the answers to part (b) questions about the beginning of Sikhism and the importance of Guru Nanak's river experience attracted high scores as a range of personal opinions were offered and supported with clear evidence or reasoning. Question 4c was usually attempted effectively. Where improvement could be found in the question is in the focus on the precise wording of the question by candidates emphasizing attitudes to the Khalsa, not what Sikhism really is.

Section 3

Candidates continue to find this section challenging. There was confusion about which celebrations qualified as melas and which were gurpurbs in questions 5d and 6d. There was also confusion about whether rites of passage qualified as devotional practices in question 6b. On the other hand, there were clinical answers to questions 5c and 6c on the importance of Vaisakhi and langar, respectively.

Section 4

This section was answered moderately well. However, candidates often failed to develop a second point in relation to 7b on the guidance provided by the Rahit Maryada. They also began to describe overseas relief efforts of Sikh organisations and provided a detailed account of relief work in the UK without focusing on the demands of the question, which was the **motivation** for relief work in the UK. Conversely, they demonstrated secure knowledge and understanding of the five Ks and rites of passage and were able to evaluate them in questions 7d about birth rituals and in 8d about symbols.

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