

# GCSE (9–1) Religious Studies

1RA0-19P2

Feedback from summer 2019

1RA0 and 1RB0





# Aims and objectives

## During this session you will:

- Receive feedback on national performance of candidates from the GCSE RS summer 2019 examination series.
- Consider the variation of candidates' performance on questions. Identify some possible reasons why candidates find some questions easier to access than others.
- Discuss the Principal Examiner's Reports.
- Address FAQs.



# Agenda

- Aims and objectives
- Specification A performance overview
- Specification B performance overview
- a) question feedback
- b) question feedback
- c) question feedback
- Principal Examiner Reports
- Examiner reports

# Overall performance





# Overall performance

- The candidates were able to respond to the question type and to the demands of the paper overall.
- The GCSE differentiated at all levels and candidates at both the top and bottom end of ability were able to access questions and were challenged.
- The majority of candidates had been well prepared and all met the different demands of AO1 and AO2. There were different levels of skills demonstrated.



# Performance of specification A

The majority of candidates entered studied Catholic Christianity in Area of Study One: Judaism in Area of Study Two: and Philosophy and Ethics in Area of Study Three.

The grade boundaries were similar to those in 2018, the answers were slightly improved on the Judaism paper as they were more accurate about the beliefs and practice of Judaism today.



# Performance of specification B

- The main choice of entry for centres was Christianity in Area of Study One and Islam in Area of Study Two, numbers have increased in all papers from 2018.
- Candidates and teachers had clearly learnt from the previous year's examination and the content and style of responses was more in line with the expectations of the mark scheme.
- The average mean marks across the papers were higher on papers in Area of Study One – Religion and Ethics than the other two areas: Area Two – Peace and Conflict and Area 3 – Philosophy and Social Justice and this was reflected in the grade boundaries.

## a) questions







# Assessment of a) questions

These questions are designed to test **AO1**.

They require candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including:

- beliefs, practices and sources of authority
- influence of individuals, communities and societies
- similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs.



# Performance of a) questions

The a) questions use the command word 'Outline'.

Most candidates were able to access these questions and achieved at least one mark.

It is important that candidates are familiar with the words used in the specification so that they can understand the words used in the questions.

The command word 'outline' means candidates must respond in an outline not a single word or a list.



# When candidates did not achieve higher marks

- Some candidates did not have the knowledge and understanding of the whole specification.
- Candidates did not read the question carefully so did not answer the question asked.
- Candidates had not been taught the terminology of the specification so did not realise what the question meant.
- Candidates did not provide an outline by using sentences, they provided a list which is stating.



# Example 1

## Question 1: Beliefs and Teachings

1 (a) Outline the role of **three** angels mentioned in the Qur'an.

(3)

Angel Jibreel is known as the angel who sent down  
Allah's messages to Muhammad (saw). Angel Izrael is  
known as the angel of death who will take humans  
last breath & Angel Kiraman Karubeen are known  
as the two angels who sit on your shoulders & record  
your good & bad deeds.

The candidate answers outlining the role of three angels in three sentences and is awarded 3 marks.



## Example 2

1 (a) Outline **three** beliefs about holy books in Islam.

(3)

One belief about the Qur'an in Islam is that muslims should recite it.

Another belief about Holy books in Islam is that they teach muslims how to become good Muslims.

One other belief about kutub in Islam is that all the words in each #kutub is true as it has come from Allah.

The candidate answers providing three correct beliefs about holy books in Islam as an outline and is awarded 3 marks.



# Example 3

1 (a) Outline **three** beliefs about holy books in Islam.

(3)

• The Quran <sup>is</sup> ~~as~~ a holy book which is believed  
to have gods saying.

• The

The candidate answers with one belief and is awarded 1 mark as they are unable to provide any more accurate beliefs.



# Example 4

3 (a) Outline **three** objects found in a synagogue.

(3)

- Torah  
- yad  
- pulpit

The candidate answers providing a list of the names of three correct objects found in a synagogue, they are named rather than outlined and the answer is awarded 1 mark as per the mark scheme for a list

b) questions







# Assessment of b) questions

These questions are designed to test **AO1**.

They require candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

Candidates need to show understanding of an aspect of religion and belief and developing this beyond a habitual response.



# Performance of b) questions

b) questions ask candidates to 'Explain **two**'.

Most candidates achieved marks on b) questions.

Development is required and this could be:

- extra information to extend or explain the point given
- quotes or references to a source of wisdom that supports the point made
- an example that links to the point made and the question asked.



# When candidates did not achieve the higher marks

- Candidates did not answer the question asked
- Candidates did not provide development of the reason/ways/features etc
- Candidates gave three or four undeveloped reasons, for this they could only be awarded 2 marks
- Candidates gave one reason/way/feature etc and developed it into a paragraph of information but as there was not second they could not go beyond 2 marks



# Example 5

(b) Explain **two** reasons why the founding of the Sangha is important.

(4)

The founding of the Sangha is important because the Sangha is one of the Three Jewells. If the Sangha wasn't founded then Buddhists would not be able to enjoy the sense of community they have within the Sangha.

Another reason the <sup>founding of the</sup> Sangha is important is because it marks the start of the Buddhist community. The Sangha is important for community because within the Sangha Buddhists can meditate with others and worship together and enjoy each other's company.

The candidate answers developing two reasons and is awarded 4 marks.

Some candidates answered this question by describing the importance of the Sangha today not the founding of the Sangha and therefore could not be awarded marks.



## Example 6

(b) Explain **two** beliefs about life after death shown in the Bible.

(4)

One belief about life after death is that for the good doers they will go to heaven and the people who believed in Jesus. This is evident in bible where it says, "we have a eternal house is heaven." This means the believers of Jesus and good doers will be in heaven forever.

Another belief about life after death is the wrong doers and people who committed sin will go to hell. This is evident in the Bible where it says, "there will be everlasting destruction." Therefore, will have everlasting punishment.

The candidate answers by providing two beliefs and developing them and is awarded 4 marks.

Some candidates answered this question by describing beliefs not found in the Bible and these could not be awarded marks.



## Example 7

(b) Explain **two** ways a Christian might celebrate Christmas as a religious festival.

(4)

Christmas is a celebration Christians take place in. Its the day that Jesus was born. His birthday. Christians believe that Jesus is Gods son and that he is important. Christians believe its a day of happiness and a day to share love. Its the day Gods son was born.

The candidate answers the question 'What is celebrated at Christmas' rather than how it is celebrated and therefore cannot be awarded any marks.



## Example 8

(b) Explain **two** beliefs about life after death shown in the Bible.

(4)

Belief one: one belief is that after you have died your Soul is judged by God and is being decided whether you must go heaven or hell.

Belief two: The second belief is that once you have died your soul goes to another vessel (living creature) and is reborn in that body. This is known as reincarnation.

The candidate answers the question using one correct developed belief but then uses an incorrect belief and gains 2 marks for one developed belief.

## c) questions







# Assessment of c) questions

These questions are designed to test **AO1**.

They require candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

Candidates need to show understanding of an aspect of religion and belief and developing this beyond a habitual response.

**They require a source of wisdom and authority.**



# Performance of c) questions

c) questions ask candidates to 'Explain **two**'.

Most candidates achieved marks on c) questions.

Development is required and this could be:

- extra information
- quotes or references
- an example.

Many candidates were able to **use a source of wisdom and authority accurately**.



# Sources of wisdom

- The candidate does not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- It should be able to be recognised if the gist of the paraphrase and 'Bible' or 'Christian teaching' can be entered into a search engine and referenced.
- If the candidate states that it is in *John 1:18* and then states another verse from *John* – then this is awarded. Candidate are not expected to be able to reference verses but it must be the correct book.
- If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (John 1:18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Jesus and it was Paul or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it does not gain the mark.



# When candidates did not achieve the higher marks

- The same issues arose to those on the b) questions (slide 19)
- Some candidates forced quotes into their answers rather than using them in a coherent manner. For example, 'Love thy neighbour' was used when it really was not relevant.
- Some candidates tried to use the sources of wisdom rather than focussing on their reasoning.
- Some references were incorrectly attributed for example Paul said 'love your neighbour'



# Example 9

(c) Explain **two** ways in which revelation might prove the existence of Allah.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One way in which revelation ~~can~~ might prove the existence of Allah is that ~~is that~~ it contains certain information that has not yet been discovered. For example, the Quran is a revelation and it contains many things which are beneficial ~~for us~~ which scientists are only finding out to be true now. This proves the existence of Allah as ~~who~~ whose ~~will~~ ~~or~~ knows everything and has the power to be able to know what <sup>is good</sup> ~~will~~ ~~or~~ and bad for us before it is discovered, ~~if so~~ God must exist.

Another way in which revelation might prove the existence of Allah is that it predicts stuff that will happen in the future and it does happen. In the Quran it says that Allah is the knower of the unseen. No one has the power to tell the future so precisely except Allah. So Allah must exist.



# Example 9 commentary

**The candidate was awarded 5 marks.**

The candidate provides two developed ways and in addition uses a source of wisdom.

Way one 'not yet been discovered' (1)

this is developed by reference to a source of wisdom Qur'an 'finding out to be true now' (1)

Way two 'predicts stuff' (1)

this is developed by reference to the source of wisdom 'knower of the unseen' (1)  
further developed by 'power to tell the future' (1)

- The reference to a source of wisdom was accurate.
- There are alternative interpretations of the word 'knower' in different Qur'anic interpretations.

Examiners were asked to use their judgement when searching for phrases and quotes and take into account that the Arabic can be interpreted slightly differently by different sources.



# Example 10

(c) Explain **two** reasons why biblical visions are important for Christians.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One reason why biblical visions are important is because it promotes God's will <sup>and</sup> helps mankind to ~~not~~ acknowledge this. This is evident through Noah's vision to save mankind. This means that God is willing to help <sup>humans</sup> ~~them~~ if they worship and respect their faith in God and in Christianity.

Another ~~Another~~ reason is that it proves God's faith in mankind and wants <sup>them to obey</sup> ~~them to~~ him. This shows that God is omnipotent as he with the visions to people, they can achieve or being a good Christian.



# Example 10 commentary

**The candidate was awarded 5 marks.**

The candidate provides two developed reasons and additionally makes use of a source of wisdom.

Reason one - 'promotes God's will' (1)

This is developed by reference to a source of wisdom - 'Noah's vision to save mankind' - this is a paraphrase of the story of Noah (1)

This is developed by 'God is willing to help humans'

Reason two 'proves God ... wants them to obey him' (1)

This is developed by 'with the visions to people this can be achieved' (1)

Quotes do not have to be verbatim, they can be a paraphrase.





# Example 11

(c) Explain **two** reasons why celebrating Pesach is important for many Jews.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Many Jewish celebrations <sup>first</sup> were brought <sup>(5)</sup> upon - ~~are ancient~~  
- many years ago  
but are still celebrated through today's  
life. Pesach is a celebration that  
is lived out by many Jews. It allows Jews  
to unite as a community and connect  
with their faith, ~~as~~ Pesach is a  
festival which is a celebration. Many  
Jews believe that festivals are a way  
of growing and strengthening the Jewish  
faith and relationship with God.  
It is commanded by God to live out <sup>many</sup> ~~the~~  
festivals including Pesach, so many Jews  
take part in these celebrations to show  
their everlasting devotion to God and to  
live by the covenant ~~off~~ ~~to~~ at Sinai.



## Example 11 commentary

Many candidates responded with answers which were vague or general, possibly due to a lack of knowledge – it is important for the whole specification to be studied.

This candidate was awarded 2 marks for two reasons.

Reason one – ‘It allows Jews to unite as a community’ (1)

Reason two – ‘It is commanded by God’ (1)

This answer has numerous sentences which could be awarded 1 mark however none are developed.

Although the reasons awarded are not specifically about Pesach they are not incorrect.



# Example 12

(c) Explain **two** reasons why Muslims believe in the existence of the afterlife.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One reason why muslims believe in the existance of the after life is because Allah tells this to us in Qur'an to warn us of Jahannam and help guide us to Jannah. "A pie in the sky, when I die." Another reason why muslims believe in the existance of the after life is because it adds meaning to life and is mentioned in other ~~kitab's~~ ~~as~~ the Qur'an ~~as~~ well as well as other ~~kitab's~~.



# Example 12 commentary

The candidate was awarded 3 marks.

The candidate gave one developed and one reason (not developed) with no relevant source of authority.

Reason One – Allah tells this to us in the Qur'an (1),  
Developed by – to warn us of Jahannam and help guide us to Jannah (1)

Reason Two - It adds meaning to life (1)

The quote used by the candidate was not credited – the question is about Muslim beliefs and this is not a Muslim belief.

The candidate goes on to give a further simple reason which repeats the initial reason and does not develop the idea of adding meaning to life.

# Principal Examiner Reports





# Principal Examiner Reports

The Principal Examiner who is responsible for each paper in the GCSE has written a report on each of this year's papers.

These can be found on the Edexcel website in Examination materials and in Results Plus –if you do not have access please ask your examinations officer.

In each report the Principal Examiner provides comments and examples for every question in the paper. These specifically address the way the mark scheme was applied and provide a commentary on how candidates responded.

They are extremely useful as they explain the way items were marked and the way candidates were expected to respond to the questions.



# Advice summary

- Use the specification terminology in teaching and preparing candidates for examinations, the language in the specification will be used in the examination questions.
- Candidates should write in sentences for all questions on the paper.
- Candidates should read the question carefully and answer the question asked.
- When a candidate uses a source of wisdom it should be integral to the candidate's answer and used accurately, not artificially inserted.



# Places to get Edexcel material and advice

The Pearson Edexcel website contains lots of materials, which have been checked by senior examiners including:

course planners, exemplar material, explanation of command words, marking guidance, definitions of useful terminology, recordings of past training events, mapping when changing Awarding organisations and schemes of work:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/subjects/religious-studies.html>

For further support, [email and chat to us](#).





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# Thank you

