



Pearson  
Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies A

Paper 2 Study of Second Religion

2E Hinduism

## **Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications**

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com) or [www.btec.co.uk](http://www.btec.co.uk). Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at [www.edexcel.com/contactus](http://www.edexcel.com/contactus).

## **Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere**

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: [www.pearson.com/uk](http://www.pearson.com/uk)

Summer 2024

Publications Code 1RA0\_2E\_2406\_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2024

## 1RA0\_2E

### Introduction

This was the first examination series since the introduction of the revised mark scheme for **d** type questions. Centres are advised that there are extensive resources to support teachers in preparing their candidates for **d** type questions on the Pearson Edexcel website.

**a** type questions require that the candidate give three pieces of information in response to the question. It is important that the candidate not simply give a list of items, but that each piece of information conveyed is presented either in its own sentence, or at least in its own clause within a sentence.

**b** type questions require that the candidate should be able to present two pieces of information; typically, two reasons for something, two attitudes to something, two ways for something. To gain full marks on this question, the candidate should aim to develop each of those reasons, attitudes or ways. This can be done by adding additional relevant information, by giving an example or by citing a religious source. The number of reasons/ways etc. is limited to 2 and so candidates are not able to access a third mark by giving a third reason/way.

**c** type questions are answered similarly to **b** questions, except that here the candidate has the potential to gain an additional development mark from the use of a source of wisdom and authority that is relevant both to the question asked and to the point that they are making. The use of a source of wisdom and authority on its own does not automatically gain the additional mark but is a means for the candidate to gain a further mark where they have already given a developed response. On the basis (outlined above for **b** questions) that a source of wisdom and authority can be used as a means of developing a response, candidates can use two, relevant, sources of wisdom and authority in a **c** question to access the third mark for that particular explanation or reason.

**d** type questions allow candidates to give reasons for and against a particular proposition, whilst coming to a justified conclusion. The response needs to show evidence of appraisal if it is to access the higher levels available, and this appraisal should not be superficial – simply stating that an argument is strong (or weak), or supporting it with an additional reason, rather than an appraisal of the argument. Importantly, appraisal is not the only factor in accessing Levels 3 and 4, but one of several. An answer may show good appraisal, but be full of disparate, undeveloped, ideas that fail to make connections and so be a better fit for the lower levels of the mark scheme. A significant number of candidates used additional answer sheets this year, particularly for their **d** questions. In only a few cases did the additional answer sheets result in the candidate accessing a higher level on the mark scheme. Candidates are advised that their time is probably best spent planning their answers and ensuring their coherence and consistency.

Overall, the most successful candidates tended to understand key terminology - and whilst 'keywords' are not assessed on this paper, it became apparent that some candidates had benefited from being taught them. Successful candidates

were able to develop their responses, however simply, and were able to successfully deploy a range of sources of wisdom and authority to support and develop their responses. In **d** answers, the most successful candidates considered the various merits of the arguments they were presenting by, for example, appraising the **relative** authority of different sacred texts or the **comparative** validity of secular or scientific arguments in an integrated manner which showed the capacity to link connected ideas. In future examination series, this latter capacity would seem likely to be key to accessing the highest grades.

## Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Any technical vocabulary used in the question paper will also be in the Specification. Check your understanding of this vocabulary, especially where there are similar looking words with different meanings (arti and artha, karma and kama). It would also seem to be a worthwhile exercise to make sure that you understand some of the technical terms in the Specification that are not subject specific for example, is the difference between 'three beliefs about **the nature of** Brahman' and 'three beliefs about Brahman'?

Allow yourself enough time to both read *and* understand the questions. Make sure that you explain things that require explaining and that you are in fact answering the question that has been set. If you don't address the specific question asked, you will lose valuable time in the exam, writing an answer that can only access some of the marks.

The Specification gives some key texts for each section of the exam. Take time to learn some of these. When you use the quote in your exam, make sure that it is 'doing something' in your answer and not just dropped in as an afterthought. The quote will gain marks only if it is developing one of the points you've made – rather than being appended to the answer (often in a discrete paragraph) saying "A source of wisdom and authority to support this is...".

Read the bullet points in part **d** questions carefully and make sure that you cover them - if you are asked to provide non-religious reasons, make sure you do. If non-religious reasons are not asked for, you can save yourself time in the exam by not giving them. Remember that reasons from another religion are not *non-religious* and will not be considered as such.

**d** questions require you to say how effective or 'strong' the elements of the argument you are giving are - but do not limit yourself to saying that x is a strong argument; tell the examiner why x is stronger than y. Is it supported by a more authoritative text for example? The mark scheme talks about 'superficial appraisal' so try to go beyond the

superficial. Answers where every paragraph ends either 'This is a strong argument because it is supported by scripture' or 'This is a weak argument because it is just an opinion' are always going to seem a little superficial.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar are marked in 1d. Re-read your answer, after you have written it. Does it have capital letters and full stops? Does it have commas? If an upper-case letter is used in the question (for example, the Divine or Brahman), did you also use an upper case letter

1a

The four aims of life were well understood by candidates and had clearly been well taught. Where marks were dropped, it tended to be through confusing words that are spelt similarly (arti and artha, kama and karma

1b

Those candidates who were familiar with traditions associated with Lakshmi tended to be able to produce two developed reasons. In a very few cases candidates confused Lakshmi with another deity or figure. This was only credited where there was a clear connection between the two, as is the case with Sita for example.

1c

Although the question is clearly derived from the Specification, it was pleasing to see just how many candidates were able to answer this challenging question well, with some convincing responses referencing jnana yoga as their starting point, that allowed them to access sources of wisdom and authority that they knew well.

1d

This question lent itself to the for and against nature of **d** questions as almost all candidates understood Saguna and Nirguna Brahman well enough to be able to extol the virtues of each. This, in turn, allowed them to demonstrate an understanding of religion and belief that was at least sound, and that saw them comfortably into Level 3 at least.

2a

There were many successful answers to this question, with candidates offering a range of purpose from the explicitly spiritual through to the communitarian.

2b

Confusion between the words arti and Artha caused one or two candidates to misstep, but the depth of knowledge of the majority of candidates was pleasing to see.

2c

The wording of the question was taken directly from the Specification and it was unfortunate that some candidates did not understand the phrase 'representations of the Divine' well enough to be able to access full marks. This was particularly unfortunate where other answers given by the candidate, elsewhere in the paper, suggested that they had the knowledge needed to be successful with this question.

2d

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. A minority gave answers that referenced secular thinking about charity and this could not be credited.