

IGCSE

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Religious Studies (4425)

This Examiners' Report relates to Mark
Scheme Publication code: UG018571

November 2006

Examiners' Report

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January 2007

Publications Code UG018571

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IGCSE Religious Studies (4425) Paper 1

Principal Examiner's Report: General Comments

IGCSE Religious Studies 4425 was offered for the first time in May 2006, and the total entry for November 2006 was extremely small.

The questions in Paper 1 are generic ones, which can be answered from the standpoint of one, or more, of the six major world religions (although there are four questions that ask candidates to answer from the standpoint of only one chosen religion). Sections A-D assess AO1 (Knowledge) and AO2 (Understanding). Each section contains two three-part questions, of which candidates must answer all parts of one question. Part (a) tests AO1, and relates to definitions of the key words for the particular section; part (b) also tests AO1, and requires candidates to outline or describe a religious (or non-religious) belief(s), teaching(s), or practice(s). Part (c) questions assess AO2, and require candidates to explain a religious (or non-religious) belief(s), teaching(s), or practice(s). Section E assesses AO3 (Evaluation), and consists of eight questions, of which candidates must answer two. Questions take the form of controversial statements, relating to the beliefs, teachings and practices covered in the previous sections. Candidates are asked whether they agree with the statement, and to give reasons for their opinion.

Overall, candidates showed adequate knowledge of the religion(s) they had chosen to study. However, there was evidence that candidates are not sufficiently aware of the generic nature of Paper 1, and of the need to have knowledge/understanding of key religious ideas that are not specific to any one religion and of non-religious ideas and responses. In general, it is important that candidates read all the questions carefully, to make certain that they understand exactly what the questions are about and what information they need to provide.

It is essential that candidates have a thorough knowledge of the generic key words in Appendix 3 of the Specification to perform well in the part (a) questions in Sections A - D. Responses to Sections A-D part (b) questions, testing AO1, tended to be stronger than those to part (c) questions, testing AO2. Answers to 'explain why' questions (the majority) tended to be descriptive, rather than explanatory, and did not always feature (as they need to) such words as 'because' or 'as'. No answers got above Level 2. Candidates must be completely clear about the difference between description and explanation, and centres should refer to the relevant sections of the Teacher's Guide (pages 8, 15-16) for discussion of Sections A - D part (c) questions and the way they are assessed. Centres will find the discussion of the specimen answers (pages 23-25 of the Guide) particularly helpful.

Answers to Section E questions varied in quality. While there were pleasing evaluations, which, by effective use of religious/moral argument and evidence/examples, and by referring to another point of view, reached Level 3, other answers achieved Level 2 or below. It is important that centres and candidates appreciate that, unless answers refer to another point of view (and also give an opinion and refer to at least one named religion), they cannot go beyond Level 2; and that, in order to go beyond Level 3, they must give a balanced account of alternative points of view and reach a personal conclusion. Candidates must also be careful not to stray from the issue being evaluated. Centres need to refer to the Teacher's Guide (pages 9, 16-17) for discussion of Section E questions and the way they are assessed, and to the specimen Section E answers (pages 26-27).

IGCSE Religious Studies Paper 1: Beliefs and Values

Section A

Question 1

Candidates were not clear about the definition of 'a linear view of time' (part (a)), and knowledge of beliefs about the immortality of the soul (part (b)) was limited. Answers to part (c) (why people believe human beings have a responsibility to look after the planet) tended to be too descriptive.

Section B

Question 3

Here, again, there was evidence that candidates need to spend more time learning the definitions of the key words (part (a)), and also (part (c)) (why some people are agnostic) to appreciate the difference between explanation and description.

Question 4

'Sanctity of life' (part (a)) is an important religious concept, and candidates should be able to define it. Part (b) concerns non-religious ideas about the causes of suffering in the world. Part (c) specifically asks candidates to use examples to explain how religious nurture may influence religious belief.

Section C

Question 5

Candidates were able to give two examples of the rights of children (part (a)). Answers to part (b) (the attitudes to contraception in one religion) only gave an isolated example of relevant knowledge (Level 1). Answers to part (c) (why attitudes to relationships between the sexes are changing) were descriptions, not explanations.

Section D

Question 7

Candidates were able to give an example of equal rights for women (part (a)), and were able to outline the benefits and problems of a multi-ethnic society (part (b)). However, once again part (c) answers (why there are different religious attitudes to the roles of men and women in society) were descriptive.

IGCSE Religious Studies Paper 1: Beliefs and Values (continued)

Section E

Question 10

This question requires candidates to evaluate the issue of whether religious people should stop believing in an afterlife, and it is vitally important that they appreciate the difference between evaluation and description and/or explanation. In Section E, candidates must give an opinion, supported by a reason, to reach Level 1.

Question 11

Responses to this question (the issue of whether God is the only possible cause of the universe) were encouraging, reaching Level 2 ('a basic for and against' the issue) or Level 3 (a 'reasoned opinion', which uses religious/moral argument, evidence or examples, and refers to another point of view).

Question 12

There was one pleasing (Level 3) response to this question (the issue of whether a society which really cares about the terminally ill would permit euthanasia).

IGCSE Religious Studies (4425) Paper 2

Principal Examiner's Report: General Comments

The questions in Paper 2 are religion specific and candidates may choose to answer questions based on either one or two of six given world religions. In November 2006 all the answers were based on Christianity and Islam. The paper assesses AO1 (knowledge) and AO2 (understanding). Candidates are required to answer two out of thirty questions and are expected to spend around thirty minutes on the two parts of each question.

Overall candidates showed an adequate knowledge of the religions they had chosen to study. However, there was evidence that candidates were not carefully reading the question and this meant that they were not sufficiently aware of the specific knowledge and understanding required for each question. This, in turn, led to candidates giving information which, although correct, was not relevant to the question.

Candidates tended to do better on those parts of the paper which assessed AO1. Where AO2 was assessed there was a tendency towards description rather than explanation which meant that marks given for part (b) questions were generally lower than those given to part (a) questions.

IGCSE Religious Studies Paper 2: The Religious Community

Question 6(a)

This question was generally answered well although candidates should note the difference between a Christian feature of the celebration of Christmas, and a secular feature of the celebration which has no religious significance.

Question 6(b)

This question produced a poorer response than part (a). This was mainly due to the answers lapsing into a simple description of Quaker worship rather than an explanation as to why silence is a particularly important aspect of the worship.

Question 9(a)

Answers showed a sound knowledge of the contribution of Saint Paul to the development of Christianity. There was evidence of some confusion of Saint Paul's words and deeds with those of the other apostles, and this prevented answers from reaching level 4.

Question 9(b)

Once again, answers lost marks because they tended towards simple accounts of Jesus' baptism without sufficient explanation as to why it is considered significant.

Question 19 (a)

This was successfully answered as candidates clearly linked the examples of the life of the Prophet with the ideal Muslim way of life in today's world.

Question 19(b)

Answers revealed a good knowledge of the contents of the Prophet's final sermon. However, as with other attempts at answering AO2 type questions, there was insufficient explanation given to reach level 4.

Question 20(a)

Answers to both parts of this question reveal the importance of a careful reading of the question on the part of the candidate. In the case of part (a); answers clearly demonstrated a good knowledge of the nature and structure of the mosque, however the candidates failed to pinpoint the varied ways in which Muslims may use the mosque.

Question 20(b)

Unfortunately, no marks were awarded for answers to this question since candidates gave a very good explanation of the significance of Makkah rather than Madinah. This is a further illustration of the importance of reading the question.

Statistics

IGCSE Religious Studies (4425) Grade Boundaries

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	83	69	55	41	32	24	16	8

Note: Grade Boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject depending on the demands of the question paper

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