

Examiners' Report

Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE Religious Studies (4425) Paper 01

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Publication code UG024302

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Paper 1: Beliefs and Values

General Comments

There were some excellent scripts, which contained good responses to questions in all sections of the paper, and many candidates showed thorough knowledge of the topics, particularly from the perspectives of Christianity and Islam.

The questions in Paper 1 are generic ones, which can be answered from one or more of the six major religions, although there are four questions where candidates are asked to answer from the point 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 key words for the particular section; part (b) also tests AO1, requiring 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.

Sections A-D

In part (a) questions, there was evidence of sound knowledge of the key words. There were also many answers of a pleasing standard to part (b) and part (c) questions. However, some candidates interpreted both types of question in ways which made it difficult for them to reach the higher levels. One problem was a tendency to focus on a particular word or phrase, rather than on the question as a whole. For example, Question 2 (b) concerns religious teachings about sin as the root cause of human wrongdoing, but some candidates merely outlined religious teachings about sin. Again, Question 3 (c) requires an explanation of why authority is important in religion, but some candidates addressed the issue of the importance of authority in general. It is essential that candidates read questions carefully, in order to ensure that they understand what each one requires.

Questions 1, 4, and 6 were more popular than Questions 2, 3 and 5. Questions 7 and 8 were more or less equally popular.

Section E

There were some impressive responses, which were well supported by religious/moral evidence and/or examples which took full account of the alternative point(s) of view and reached Levels 3 and 4. However, there were also answers which were limited by their failure to refer to another point of view, due to candidates' desire to argue for their own point of view, while there was an increase in the number of answers which failed to refer to one named religion.

Question 12 was the most popular question, followed by Questions 11, 15, 10, 13 and 9. Few candidates attempted Questions 16 or 14.

Comments on individual questions

Section A

Question 1

Although many candidates gave a correct definition of 'freewill', quite a few did not distinguish between it and 'freedom'. Part (b) was generally answered well, with candidates showing sound or good knowledge of their chosen religion's (mainly Christianity or Islam) teachings about human destiny. In part (c), while there were developed and comprehensive explanations, which reached the higher levels, there were also descriptive responses which simply repeated the Genesis story. Some candidates evaluated the issue of human beings' responsibilities towards other living creatures, rather than explaining why some people believe in human dominance.

Question 2

There were many accurate answers to part (a). In part (b), a lot of candidates outlined religious teachings about sin without addressing the whole question, which is about sin as the root cause of human wrongdoing. Answers to part (c) varied in quality. While good responses explained such reasons as lack of empirical/scientific evidence for the existence of God or the human soul, others interpreted the question as being about human selfishness and greed (a materialistic view of life), making it difficult for them to achieve the higher levels.

Section B

Question 3

Most candidates gave a correct or partially correct answer to part (a), and there were some good responses to part (b), which drew mainly on Christian or Islamic teachings. However, candidates tended to struggle with part (c). Some candidates focussed on the importance of authority in general, rather than on its importance in religion.

Question 4

Most candidates gave at least a partially correct answer to part (a), and many responses to part (b) showed good knowledge of mainly Christian and Islamic teachings about the sanctity of life. In part (c), some very good explanations reached the higher levels, but some candidates did not seem to know the difference between 'agnostic' and 'atheist'.

Section C

Question 5

Generally, candidates were able to define a reconstituted family, and, in part (b), showed sound or good knowledge of mainly Christian and Islamic teachings about promiscuity. In part (c), there were some well thought-out explanations of both religious and non-religious reasons why some people are against genetic engineering as a means of supporting successful conception.

Question 6

Part (a) was generally answered accurately. There were good responses to part (b), which reached the higher levels, but there were also responses that failed to take account of the actual question, which is about the responsibilities of different generations within the family towards each other. Some responses focused on family life in general, or how it has changed over the years. Part (c) was generally answered well, although some responses were descriptive rather than explanatory.

Section D

Question 7

In part (a), some responses confused 'multi-ethnic' and 'multi-faith', while others included definitions of both. There was some misunderstanding of part (b), which required an outline of religious teachings that support human rights. Some candidates outlined, or simply listed, human rights without referring to religious teachings. Although some candidates seemed to be unclear about what proselytisation is, there were some very good explanations in response to part (c).

Question 8

There were many accurate responses to part (a) and some very good responses to part (b), particularly from the perspective of Christianity. While there were some pleasing responses to part (c), not all answers took account of the fact that the question is about differing religious responses to growing gender equality. Such answers tended to explain, or merely outline one response, while some turned into evaluations.

Section E

Question 9

There were balanced responses, which evaluated both sides of the issue, but other responses simply made out a case for religion providing the only explanation of why the universe exists.

Question 10

Some candidates treated this as a question about whether or not there is an afterlife, and did not take account of predestination and God pre-determining what happens to human beings when they die.

Question 11

There were some well thought-out and balanced evaluations, but responses tended to be one-sided arguments for religion giving life a meaning for those who suffer.

Question 12

This was easily the most popular question. While there were responses which reached a personal conclusion on the basis of an evaluation of both sides of the issue, many responses considered only the arguments against women having a right to abortion, or simply dismissed the alternative view.

Question 13

Generally, answers focused on the arguments for religious marriage being the best way to ensure that people stay faithful to each other, but there were also balanced responses.

Question 14

This was the least popular Section E question, with answers tending to focus on the importance of discipline for children, rather than the issue of children's rights getting in the way of parents providing it.

Question 15

This was a popular question, with answers often considering both sides of the issue.

Question 16

Attempted by very few candidates, this question attracted generally balanced responses.

Statistics

iGCSE Religious Studies (4425) Grade Boundaries

Option 1 (paper 1 & paper 2)

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Subject boundary marks	100	84	70	56	43	34	25	16	7

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